


PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

VOLUME 31 | 2010



*Brothers • Flett • Bynum • Graham • Hunsinger • Lieu • Miller •
Najman • Young • Sacks • Hanciles • Lewis • McKee*



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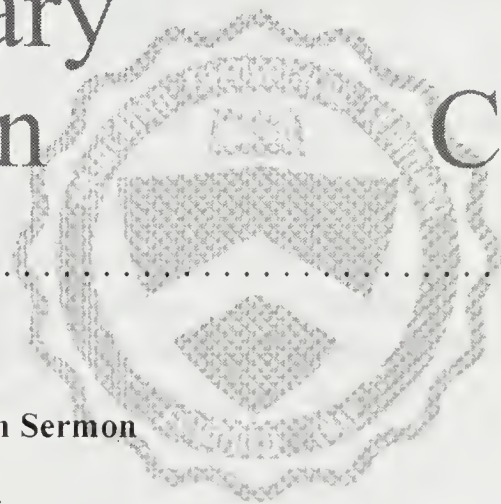
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Editor's Note

*T*wo thousand ten was a watershed year for Princeton Theological Seminary. Construction began on three large buildings for married student housing at the Seminary's Charlotte Rachel Wilson campus, leading to the replacement of outdated student apartments. On the main campus, Speer Library, home to the Seminary's prestigious library collections, simply vanished to make way for a new library building. While all this work was being done, lecturers came to campus in an uninterrupted stream, continuing to make Princeton Theological Seminary an exciting place to do theological work.

This issue of the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* features the usual rich assortment of lectures and addresses. I stand by what I have written in earlier years, namely, that each issue of the *Bulletin* provides a snapshot of the first-rate scholarship and inspiring pieces from a wide range of scholarly disciplines. There are few publications where the investment of a couple of hours of reading will expose a reader to such a varied collection of high-quality theological, historical, and philosophical work.

Professor Elsie McKee's article on Calvin's *Institutes* was inadvertently omitted from the 2009 issue of the *Bulletin*, where it would have joined other articles as a contribution to the Calvin quincentenary. Rather than accept this omission as providential and abandon it, I decided to include her piece in the 2010 issue. It provides a fascinating and fresh angle on Calvin as a pastor.

STEPHEN D. CROCCO
EDITOR

Opening Communion Sermon

Sibling Revelry

by Michael A. Brothers

Michael A. Brothers, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Speech Communication in Ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. He preached this sermon at the opening communion service on September 20, 2010, in Miller Chapel.

LUKE 15:11-32

*I*t was the final gathering of pastors at the Joe R. Engle Institute of Preaching. I look forward to this institute all year, when those who have been in ministry for at least two years come to be better preachers—to better proclaim the gospel in their particular communities. I look forward to this gathering of preachers because they know what they *know*, and they know what they *don't know*—and they want my help, though I'm kept humble by the pastor who said, “They really should teach a speech course like this at Princeton Seminary.” Turns out, he was one of my former students in the required year-long course in speech.

It was at this final gathering that Dean James Kay, quoting James Forbes, said that preachers need to be *called* and *re-called*. As Dean Kay continued, an irreverent reverend next to me whispered in my ear, “That could be taken two different ways.” Disguising a chuckle as a cough, I realized he was right. Whether a preacher is re-called or *recalled* depends on how it is said and how it is heard. It depends on the tone of voice.

In the parable of the prodigal son and the elder brother, we have images and tones for characters who are both re-called and *recalled*. We often think of this story in terms of plot. However, when reading the text aloud, I find myself

focusing on the eye and the ear. Helmut Thielcke said that the “parables are the picture book of God.” And I would add, “with sound.”

The images in the first half of the parable are familiar to us as pictures hung on the wall, scenes embellished with depictions ranging from church school cartoons to Rembrandt. The first frame is the cocky pose of the younger sibling, straight-eyed, asking for—or rather, demanding—his inheritance through the selling of property. Seen through our eyes, where parents are expected to jeopardize their future financial security by sending their youngest on their way—to college, or grad school, or seminary—we may miss the first-century recognition of a scene set for financial and family ruin. Property was security, and children guaranteed the future. They were needed to run things and keep things going. They were needed to work. In one painting of this scene, in the corner of the house, the mother is knitting, with an anxious look on her face, seemingly powerless during a transaction between father and son that will change the life of her family forever. As for the tone of asking for your inheritance ahead of time, you might as well call your father dead to his face. Try to say *that* out loud with the names of your own parents to get a taste of the impact of this scene.

The picture in the next frame is abstract, dark, and cloudy; you can’t really make out any figures. The title underneath reads, “Squandering Wealth in Dissolute Living,” a picture kept pretty vague by the narrator Jesus but fleshed out with detail in the imagination of the older brother: “Your son devoured your property with prostitutes.” I might add that this section was pretty fleshed out in the imaginations of some commentators as well.

The next picture is that of a gaunt, broken, lonely, lifeless-looking shell of a man bent over a pigsty, a sign recognized by eyes earlier than our own as insult to injury, ultimate debasement, a situation that can’t get any worse.

When the father enters the picture, however, it’s like the great wall of Hogwarts in a Harry Potter movie, where the characters go back and forth entering living scenes in picture frames. Instead of creating new portraits, it’s as if the father appears in all three: inverting, flipping, smudging out, and painting over; a straight-eyed, demanding pose of a son becomes averted eyes and an attempted kneel, failed because of a clutching embrace that is not ready to let go.

When the father enters the portrait of the murky shadows of “dissolute living,” he does not clean it up, whitewash it, or discreetly turn it toward the wall. He splashes it with color and sound—details of an extravagant banquet with music and dancing, prompted by his call, “Let’s eat and celebrate!” This is more than

a dinner party; and it's more than cranking up the Black Eyed Peas. I would paint this party as a potlatch, a festal ceremony of the Native Americans and First People of my childhood home, the Pacific Northwest. Here the host gives extravagant gifts to all the guests. *Potlatch*, even the name itself means to "give away" or "a gift." In fact, it has been legally banned in some places because the hosts would literally give away *everything* they owned.

When the father enters the next picture, it's as if the negative space has been inverted; the once exposed outline of a hungry jagged body is now filled, fully enveloped by a parent's embrace. Rags are painted over with a robe for the honored guest at a feast. Inedible pigs give way to a succulent calf. Ring and shoes are detailed onto hands and feet—blotting out, erasing any conditions for full family membership. As for the sound of the scene, some writers want you to choose between two options regarding the *tone* of the younger son. On one side is an earnest confession of a contrite heart—like the Publican, the sound of sincere remorse: "Lord, forgive me, a sinner." On the other side, the younger son is portrayed as simply an opportunist. In the extreme, he is portrayed as a caricature from an episode of *Jersey Shore*: "Whoa, I mus' be crazy stayin' here—they got a sweet deal at home!"

His confession was probably like ours, a mixture of remorse and desperation, the sound of homesickness. Either way, it doesn't matter. The son's rehearsed speech is ignored, interrupted by shouts for restoration and celebration. I never really experienced this interruption until I read it aloud. You don't necessarily see it on the page, but you can hear it: the only requirement of the lost to be found, is being found—being there.

Searching. Running. Embracing. Celebrating. These images are familiar, and they need to be, until they become familiar gestures of our congregations. But what surprised me in the second half of the story was how unfamiliar I was with the elder brother. Not so much the *image*—two silhouettes against the dusky sky outside the house, one sulking, the other pleading. I was familiar enough with this *image*. I was unfamiliar with the elder son's *voice*. When "taking on" his voice, it's too easy to set him up.

In performance studies, we say there are flat characters and round characters. Flat doesn't mean monotone with no emotion; it means that emotions and voice are staged, set, and predictable. If it's a flat character in a morality play, once you learn the lesson, "Don't be like the self-righteous elder brother; be like the welcoming Father," you can easily throw the character away. If it's a melodrama, the preacher's rant against the grudge-bearing son is good entertainment,

and when the entertainment is over, the son is easily dismissed. Both have nothing to do with the rounded characters in our lives, including ourselves.

So to better understand the elder brother's complaint, I offer some complaints that I've heard against homecomings from being a pastor, a teacher, a family member, and a friend. I heard a woman who was planning her wedding, who, after not hearing from her father for thirteen years when he abandoned his family, is told by her mother that he would like to attend the ceremony. He realizes it probably would be "too much" to escort his daughter down the aisle but wants to know if he can attend. The tone of the bride's voice is filled with anger and hurt: "After thirteen years, how dare he!"

I've heard a sister and a brother whose other sister never visited their dying mother but showed up at the funeral asking about the divvying up of their mother's furniture. "What did she ever do?" "She has her nerve, coming in here like that."

I've heard a father spit out his inner turmoil when his son, who stole from the family business, wanted to return for Christmas dinner. "Not at my table," mutters the father.

Perhaps by hearing a little clearer the true anger and resentment of the elder sibling, we might know how hard it would be to enter that door, to step inside. And we might understand a little better why the father had to plead.

I've heard Michelle Shocked sing her complaint against the whole story:

What's to be done with a prodigal son?
Welcome him home with open arms
Throw a big party, invite your friends
Our boy's come back home

When a girl goes home with the oats he's sown
It's draw your shades and your shutters
She's bringing such shame to the family name
The return of the prodigal daughter

I've heard a woman in her thirties tell me of her seventeen-year-old daughter who appeared out of the blue one day on her doorstep. Seventeen years ago, as a teenager, she had offered her baby daughter for adoption. Now she could hardly wait to introduce her daughter to her church, not only to her friends but also to

the young women she taught in church school. After that Sunday, she was called in and “gently notified” that there had been complaints. It was no longer appropriate for her to serve as a teacher, for she would not be a good role model for young women. She told me, “I was so naïve. I was so excited about finding my daughter and bringing her to church, it didn’t even occur to me there would be a problem.” She and her daughter were inside celebrating, whereas the congregation was out in the fields—work, work, work.

The truth is that most of us are the elder sibling in the story, or we wouldn’t be here today: responsibly following the rules, steps, procedures, and exams (and expecting others to do so); making up for lack of joy with discipline, and a lack of God’s presence with productivity. And when we are “prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,” we forget it’s to leave the one we “love.” So we bury our hoes all the deeper in the same place—work, work, work. Perhaps one of the reasons the elder son is *here*, while the party is going on *over there* is not a matter of principle. He just can’t dance. He never learned how, never had the time.

Sometimes it takes an unabashed celebration of salvation to remind us that we’ve worked ourselves into a far off place—and that we need to be *recalled* in order to be *re-called*.

We who are working in the fields of faith are met by the host of the potlatch, who says “All that is mine is yours. I’ve already given it all away. I gave you my son. But there is a celebration, for all who were dead—and all who are dead inside—to come to life. We have to celebrate!”

We may even have to dance.

Do you hear the tones? The opening wide of doors? The snap of bread; the splash of wine? Songs at the supper table? In the words of the host, “Let’s eat and celebrate!” ■

Lecture

The Resurrection from the Dead as the Declaration of God's Eternal Being and the Christian Community's Eschatological Reality

by John G. Flett

*Dr. John G. Flett is writing his habilitation dissertation at the Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal-Bethel, Germany. His dissertation, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community*, was published in 2010 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans). He delivered this paper at the Fifth Annual Conference on Karl Barth, sponsored by the Center for Barth Studies of Princeton Theological Seminary, June 20–23, 2010. The theme of the Conference was “The Church Is as Such a Missionary Church: Barth as a ‘Missional Theologian.’” The papers presented at the conference will appear in a forthcoming volume.*

JOHN 11:25

I. INTRODUCTION

It is a common concern, stated to the point of redundancy, that Karl Barth displays, quoting Nicholas Healy, a “strong tendency towards an abstract and reductionistic ecclesiology.”¹ I intend here to contest this claim. I do so because such assertions fail to anywhere address Barth’s thinking on the missionary shape of the church. This failure has an origin: it is the result of a blinding assumption concerning the necessary nature of the church, one that precludes mission as basic. This notion of the church, here termed *nonmissionary*, includes a determination of the church’s “visibility,” of what it means to live the “narrative” of the gospel. It determines, in other words, a peculiar account of Christian witness. This nonmissionary assumption does not neglect mission— this is

¹ Nicholas M. Healy, “The Logic of Karl Barth’s Ecclesiology: Analysis, Assessment, and Proposed Modifications,” *Modern Theology* 10, no. 3 (1994): 263.

important to remember. By virtue of mission's marginalization, a functionalist account of the missionary act results. It is derivative of the church and its witness, and dependent on external contingencies for its initiation and form. Mission, in other words, does exist but precisely in such a way that it is not substantive when defining the church. Such a general assumption consigns all references to mission to a theological redundancy. This is true also for Barth. Insofar as he describes the church in missionary terms, the normative dismissal of mission makes his church appear to be evacuated of content. This is especially so given that he uses "mission" to critique those elements deemed otherwise necessary to the church and its witness.

The generic charge of Barth's insubstantial ecclesiology is assumed to be a legacy of his emphasis on the divine to the neglect of the human and can be parsed in three ways. Blame lies, in the first instance, with Barth's eschatology. In Wolfhart Pannenberg's estimation, Barth's "concentration on the constitutive reality of God in relation to the present replaced the biblical eschatology of the future. Thus this eschatology lost its specific temporal structure, its tension relative to the future consummation."² To redress the pretentious usurpation of the divine by the human, God breaks into history with such force that all is rendered asunder. This apocalyptic purification seemingly consumed even the future, leaving no history, no stage, for the Christian community to work out its salvation even in fear and trembling. To quote David Fergusson, "Barth's early tendency to telescope all eschatological occurrence into a single momentary event renders any narrative account of the last things problematic."³ Everything of theological gravitas has already occurred in the act of God. The church contributes nothing of its own. The church and its witness, famously, take shape simply as "a crater formed by the explosion of a shell."⁴

Second, Barth purportedly compounds this evacuation of the historical by the eschatological with a retreat into protology. Barth would himself acknowledge that the "eschatological application on which [the theology of crisis] rested was too strong and arbitrary and independent like all reactions."⁵ His 1956 essay, "The Humanity of God," noted that this driving concern with the divine as divine had produced something of a characterization: "a God absolutely unique

² Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.), vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 357.

³ David Fergusson, "Barth's Resurrection of the Dead: Further Reflections," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 1 (2003): 71.

⁴ Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, 6th ed. (London: Oxford University, 1933), 36.

⁵ Karl Barth, *CD II/1*, 636.

in His relation to [the human] and the world, overpoweringly lofty and distant, strange, yes even wholly other.”⁶ The proposed solution lay in understanding that God’s “deity *encloses humanity in itself*.”⁷ For Colin Gunton, this merely reinforces the problem. In the election of Jesus Christ and the *de jure* election of all humanity in him, “eschatology is so determined by protology that the end is effectively determined by the beginning, and history is, apparently, closed to the recreating work of the Spirit.”⁸ The eschatological problem as a consequence of God’s consumption of the present retreats now into the nature of God’s *a se* perfection. The end of time is a story already told before creation. With the future of God’s acting found in his eternal decision, the event of Jesus Christ exhausts that future. Human response to God’s action rests simply in witnessing to, by acknowledging, a past event.

To this is added, third, a pneumatological complaint. For Joseph Mangina, the critiques centered on temporality are better summarized as a “*pneumatological* worry and specifically, a worry about the role played by the church in the economy of salvation.”⁹ Robert Jenson holds a similar position; it is Barth’s “avoidance of the *church*” that underlies the “whole web of Spirit-avoidance” in the *Church Dogmatics*.¹⁰ Nor does this complaint occur in an ecclesiological vacuum. Jenson expects an ecclesiology of communion and a definite account of the Spirit’s acting in relation to the witness of the church. “[I]f the Pentecostal creation of a structured continuing community were identified as the ‘objectivity’ of the gospel’s truth *pro nobis*, then this community itself, in its structured temporal and spatial extension, would be seen as the *Bedingung der Möglichkeit* [*condition of the possibility*] of faith.”¹¹ Efforts to overcome Barth’s observed ecclesiological limitation employ the language of the empirical, of continuity, of “concrete visibility.” Mangina contrasts Barth’s position in which the church becomes “merely a human echo or analogy of Christ’s completed work,” with one in which the church is “somehow the herald of new activity in which God is engaged between now and the eschaton.”¹² The difference seemingly resides in the theological substance attributed to the community and its institutions, as this is the proper working of the Spirit and the necessary form of Christian witness.

⁶ Karl Barth, “The Humanity of God,” in *The Humanity of God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 37.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸ Colin E. Gunton, “Election and Ecclesiology in the Post-Constantinian Church,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53, no. 2 (2000): 214.

⁹ Joseph L. Mangina, “Bearing the Marks of Jesus: The Church in the Economy of Salvation in Barth and Hauerwas,” *The Scottish Journal of Theology* 52, no. 3 (1999): 282.

¹⁰ Robert W. Jenson, “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went,” *Pro Ecclesia* 2, no. 3 (1993): 302.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 303.

¹² Mangina, “Bearing the Marks of Jesus,” 282.

Although these complaints occur in various manifestations, each finds expression in relation to Barth's account of the resurrection. As the resurrection indicates reconciliation's completion, so it occludes the eschatological unfolding of this reality within and among contingent humanity. As the resurrection declares the nature of God's perfection from all eternity, so the protological evacuates the historical. As the objectivity of reconciliation is located in Jesus Christ's prophetic ministry, so the action of the Spirit, and coincidentally the church, appear vague and muted.

That these complaints meet in the resurrection is noteworthy, for it is on this ground that Barth gives the church a *missionary structure*. Mission is the proper ordering of the community that lives in the realism of Easter. The resurrection does indeed declare the nature of the God from and to all eternity. Jesus Christ is revealed to be the true God and the true human. This active union of the divine and the human is declarative. Jesus Christ is the true witness because the "true and living God is eloquent and radiant."¹³ Far from protology exhausting the history of human response, it determines the concrete form of his community. Reconciliation is complete after the nature of God's own perfection: it is itself eloquent and radiant. The living divine-human fellowship is a history of witness. Reconciled human relationship with God corresponds to Jesus Christ's own life in the transitioning power of the Spirit: it is a community structured as a missionary community.

II. FORMING THE CHURCH "AFTER" THE APOSTLES

Before turning to Barth, it is necessary to address the shape of the church assumed as basic to the complaint against him. Criticisms issued against Barth's ecclesiology focus on the centrality he attributes to Christian witness, that is, his account of the church is not sufficient to the action of witness he deems as central. To quote Hans Urs von Balthasar, without some account of its being as a "concrete reality in the world," the church cannot "bear witness to the presence of faith and revelation in the world."¹⁴ To suggest that Barth's critics share an understanding of the form of the church is not to suggest that they espouse a common ecclesiology. They do not. They are united, however, in consigning the missionary act to only a marginal function within an otherwise defined "visible" church.

¹³ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 79.

¹⁴ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992), 245.

Missionary proposals, by extension, are seen as theologically insubstantial, as not of material significance for questions of church order and institutional structuring.

One might illustrate this contention by reference to Wolfhart Pannenberg's essay titled "The Significance of Eschatology for an Understanding of the Apostolicity and Catholicity of the Church."¹⁵ His controlling assumption is that the particular apostolic period cannot be accepted as the norm for the church following the apostles. After demonstrating the various difficulties with accounts located in both "lineal continuity" and the canon, Pannenberg proposes that the eschatological is both distinctive to, and continuing beyond, the historical boundary of the apostolic period.¹⁶ The church is apostolic, not simply due to its historical origins in the apostolic message, but in continuing the apostolic orientation to the future kingdom of God through history. The church achieves this precisely in changing its historical forms in service to the declaration of the finality of Jesus Christ, his sufficiency in answering the questions of all periods and places.

The ultimate reality of Jesus Christ's message was found in his person alone. With his death, resurrection, and ascension, the apostles made his message effective for their age through the world mission of the church. That is, the apostles remained faithful to the good news of the kingdom by changing the shape of its expression. To quote, it was "precisely through this transformation of its form that the message remained the same."¹⁷ The apostolic mission pointed to the completion of the eschatological promise of God's coming kingdom. "The present power of God's future lordship in the teaching and mission of Jesus finds its apostolic counterpart in the universal mission to all nations."¹⁸ It is not the missionary form that is important, but the continuous free invention of new forms as shaped in service to gospel proclamation.

As the apostles continued their message through this missionary form, so the church is apostolic by itself changing the form of the message. Continuity consists in the setting forth of the finality of the truth of Jesus Christ. This is not a backwards-looking continuity based in the repetition of traditional forms; it is a proclamatory event speaking to present experience.¹⁹ The formulas of Chalcedon, by way of example, were apostolic because they gave "clear expression to the unsurpassed, final truth of the incarnation of Jesus Christ and do so in a way

¹⁵ Wolfhart Pannenberg, "The Significance of Eschatology for Understanding the Apostolicity and Catholicity of the Church," in *The Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 44–68.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

that is valid in the language of their time.”²⁰ Through the history of the church, the “apostolic motif” has been retained in “the progressive doctrinal clarification of the finality of Jesus.”²¹ This leads Pannenberg sequentially into the language of catholicity and a discussion of forms of doctrine, church order, tradition and liturgy. Pannenberg thus retains the language of mission, along with a declarative sensibility. However, although he is not against an expansive account of mission, the “church” is a body that comes to being, and is faithful to its apostolic origins, by changing from the apostolic form of missionary expansion. This form itself becomes a vestige of the apostolic period.

Pannenberg’s position has much to commend it. It enables “the church to be free to live in its own historicity as opposed to that of the apostolic age and still remain in continuity with the mission of the apostles.”²² He permits institutional mobility and a sense of theological provisionality in service to the standard of the “mission of Christianity in the world.”²³ An open and generous ecclesiology results: space exists for a diversity of institutions within the church catholic without compromising both the necessity of identifiable structures and the inclusion of the relationship to the world as informative of those structures. The church must speak its message into its contemporary context and frame its life affording to this act.

The problem is that the ecclesial continuity of the apostolic mission consists in changing *from* the missionary form. The very moment of the church’s establishment is the very moment when it became structurally nonmissionary. Missionary mobility ceased to be a *structuring* element in the life of the church and its order.

A potential confusion arises at this point. The term “nonmissionary” does not indicate the absence of missions. It is not that the act of missionary sending ended with the establishment of the church. The marginalization of mission as nonessential to the structures of the church mandates both a particular definition of Christian being and the configuration of institutions in service to this end, and a determined and frenetic form of mission method. Catholic theologian Brino Forte puts the matter this way. With the presumed completion of the apostolic mission, confirmed by the pact between church and empire, the eschatological tension that drove the external movement of the early church settled within the church. With the gospel already having reached the ends of the world, “it should now be proclaimed and celebrated above all in favor of the spiritual and liturgical life of

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 54–55.

²² Ibid., 57.

²³ Ibid., 59.

the Christians. In such a way, the specific missionary activity of the community passes from the center to the margins of the ecclesiastical self-consciousness.”²⁴ The church drew the eschatological mission of the apostles into itself and thereby posited itself as the mediator of salvation.²⁵ Pastoral activity became the “normal” activity of the church, and this presupposes “a faith already preached and accepted, involves commitments and actions based upon the maturation of the faith of the believers, their sanctification through the sacraments, the defense of their faithfulness, and the promotion of their coherence with the faith professed.”²⁶ Progression in these elements defined the nature of edification. Within this setting, the mission act is merely a contingent commitment, only made necessary by historical accident and shaped in correspondence to those precipitating conditions. Mission occurs in a rushed manner with “a character of ‘decisionalism’ and of urgency, which will even concede to the use of violence,” and receives biblical warrant in verses such as Luke 14:16: “compel them to come in.”

I propose that this expectation of a shift in form—from apostolic mission to established church—is foundational to the whole discussion. The assumption, long affirmed through the theological tradition, that the apostles had completed the missionary command, removed mission from theological consideration. It is self-evident that this will have significant and ongoing consequences for formulations of the church, for how it is understood to be “concrete” and “visible,” for its liturgy and life of worship, and for its conception of and methodology for witness.

Barth does not share in this expectation. This, I suggest, is what differentiates his position and so exercises his commentators. He does not read the missionary outpouring of the first witnesses as recorded in the New Testament as historically passé. He, instead, uses this to criticize mediatorial accounts of the church—present in Reformed churches as much as in Catholic²⁷—and the

²⁴ Brino Forte, “Historical-Theological Models of the Christian Mission,” <http://www.iscs.org.hk/Common/Reader/News/ShowNews.jsp?Nid=636&Pid=9&Version=0&Cid=18&Charset=iso-8859-1> (accessed July 15, 2011).

²⁵ See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis 1991), 210.

²⁶ Forte quoting Severino Dianich, *Chiesa in Missione: Per una Ecclesiologia Dinamica* (Torino: Edizioni Paoline, 1985), 87.

²⁷ Eberhard Busch, for example, notes that in establishing specific offices to proclaim the Word and administer the sacraments, for Luther, the “meaning of the church ... resides in its mediation of salvation, so that the idea of specific offices became the dominating concept in the doctrine of the church; this left the never displaced idea of the priesthood of all believers in a comatose state.” Busch continues, in reference to Augsburg Confession VII, that “the specifically Reformed component of this ecclesiology is how the specific office held in the church is concentrated on those two tasks and how the substance of preaching is redefined. In this notion that salvation is mediated by specific office-holders to other members there is no change at all from the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church.” Eberhard Busch, “Karl Barth’s Understanding

type of weight that becomes attributed to its institutions. Mission is structurally determinative for the church. It is such because this is the eschatological form demanded by the resurrection, and it is so demanded because it is the very nature of the triune God from and to all eternity.

III. MISSIONARY WITNESS AS GOD'S "SIMPLE" BEING

This claim for the missionary identity of the church derives from Barth's understanding of the living asymmetrical fellowship of the divine and the human. Barth structures his doctrine of reconciliation according to the hypostatic union: in IV/1 we see the true God humbled; in IV/2 we see the true human exalted. To this Barth adds a third element: in IV/3 we see the history of the living unity of the true God—true human, Jesus Christ as the true witness. These three are alternately discussed according to the offices of priest, king, and prophet. Though commentators acknowledge their formal unity, attention often rests on the first two—the offices of priest and king—their relation to the two hypostates as, respectively, the divine humbled and the human exalted, and their significance for the human in justification and sanctification. The third element of witness would seem to be relative and provisional, not of material significance for understanding the nature of the divine-human relationship. For Douglas Farrow, witness is but a “lateral movement.”²⁸ Its significance for the human—the event of calling—is, to quote George Hunsinger, but the “existential” implication of the “objective aspects of salvation.”²⁹ This establishes a relative priority, whereby witness is seen as the penultimate, and eternal life as the ultimate, form of fellowship. Witness as a matter of declaring, and eternal life as one of enjoying, the salvation accomplished in and by Jesus Christ. Witness consists of fellowship with Jesus Christ in his prophetic work; eternal life, of fellowship with him in his royal work.³⁰

Witness is a penultimate event because it is limited to the time before the final *parousia*, before the final manifestation of the kingdom of God. As simply the act of declaring the salvation completed in Jesus Christ, it is not itself material to that salvation. It is a provisional act, related to, but at some distance from, the actual nature of eternal life, and so from human fellowship with the divine.

of the Church as Witness,” *St. Luke's Journal of Theology* 33, no. 2 (1990): 89.

²⁸ Douglas Farrow, “Karl Barth on the Ascension: An Appreciation and Critique,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2, no. 2 (2000): 128.

²⁹ George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (New York: Oxford University, 1991), 155.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 181.

Drawing on this variety of interpretation, Joseph Mangina orders the offices in relation to the Easter event. Before the resurrection, Jesus finished his work as priest and king; after the resurrection, he initiates his prophetic ministry.³¹ With this division, Mangina argues that Barth is “tempted to offer a totalizing interpretation of the cross that threatens to render superfluous Jesus’ appearances to his disciples.”³² The two offices of priest and king are theologically decisive. The calling to witness is participation in the prophetic office which itself—as declaration—seems external to the completing of reconciliation. Jesus Christ’s appearance to the disciples becomes superfluous because Barth fails to delineate the resurrection as “an act by which those once dead are given new life in hope.”³³ His ecclesiology lacks substance because it is located in this completion and beyond the act of Jesus Christ as priest and king. His exalting of “protology over eschatology,” according to Mangina, is guilty of “dehistoricizing the church.”³⁴

Mangina here provides a ready illustration of how relativizing the prophetic office blinds readers to Barth’s missionary definition of the historical church. The seemingly penultimate status of witness alongside the eternal enjoyment of salvation comes to mean that those called by Christ have only a limited present experience of salvation as expressed in an empirical church body.

For Barth, humiliation and exaltation are not to be conceived as sequential historical events—but neither is witness. The unity of humiliation and exaltation takes the historical form of witness. In terms of material significance, Barth is clear: the priestly and kingly offices constitute the living history of fellowship of the man Jesus Christ. Nothing further accrues to the nature of this fellowship, nor do the two natures resolve into a third. By this measure, the prophetic office does not constitute a “further development of our material knowledge of the event of reconciliation.”³⁵ To be faithful to the two natures, it is necessary to give due attention to each in turn; to describe one, not in independence from the other, but as though one were in the foreground in sharp focus and the other in the soft background. This, however, is not itself sufficient: the two must be described in their operation, in their unity. Barth, as such, posits the third Christological aspect of witness as “at once the simplest and the highest. It is the source of the two first, and it comprehends them both. As the God who humbles Himself and therefore reconciles human being with Himself, and as the human

³¹ Mangina, “Bearing the Marks of Jesus,” 275.

³² *Ibid.*, 276.

³³ *Ibid.*, 277.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 7.

exalted by God and therefore reconciled with Him, as the One who is very *God* and very *human* in this concrete sense, Jesus Christ Himself is *one*.”³⁶

Witness is the *living history* of the divine-human encounter “in its *unity* and *completeness*, the viewing of Jesus Christ Himself, in whom the two lines cross.”³⁷ As the living history of the divine and human fellowship takes the form of witness, so any failure to treat witness as substantive constitutes a failure to understand the nature of the fellowship itself.

It seems odd, at first hearing, to describe witness as the “simplest” and the “highest,” as the “source” of God’s humiliation and the human’s exaltation. It is so until we understand the particular relation of the prophetic office to the resurrection. It is possible, due to the very weight Barth gives the prophetic office in postresurrection history, to understand Mangina’s positing of the priestly and kingly offices over against the prophetic. However, as Barth rejects positing the offices in terms of a simple historical sequence, so the action of the prophetic office does not simply begin with the resurrection.³⁸ Jesus Christ’s witnessing to the Father in his mission, the culmination of which is the cross, is already the exercise of his prophetic office as the character of the living unity of the divine and the human. Jesus Christ was already a witness to the Father prior to his death. The resurrection adds nothing material to the work of the cross. “His work, His being and action, were not augmented by His resurrection. How could they be? His work was finished.”³⁹ The event of the resurrection and ascension add only this, Jesus Christ “was actually *seen* as the one who He *was* and *is*.”⁴⁰ The postresurrection life, in other words, is particularly associated with the prophetic office because here occurs the public revelation of the Son of God. With his resurrection, “His being and action as very God and very human emerged from the concealment of His particular existence as an inclusive being and action enfolding the world.”⁴¹ This movement from concealment to inclu-

³⁶ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 135.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁸ Early in the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth does include an account whereby “the prophetic office at the first (Galilean) stage, the priestly at the second (the passion) and the kingly at the third (exaltation)” (Barth, *CD* II/2, 431.) This position he later rejects, ascribing it to “a lack of clarity concerning the inner relationship of the *revelation* of Jesus Christ and His *work*.” (Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 15.) It reflects the “preponderant tendency to understand the relationship of the three mediatorial functions *e ratione executionis*, i.e., as that of different stages in the course of the history of Jesus, and therefore in a historical framework.” This change is further made in the context of discussing the missionary nature of the prophetic office. The prior approach denudes the missionary question, whereas the latter forces it to the fore.

³⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 282.

⁴⁰ Barth, *KD* IV/2, 149 (my translation); ET, 133.

⁴¹ Barth, *CD* IV/3.1, 283.

sion is not a movement of abstraction from Christ's humanity to his protological existence, but a declaration of what was already true of Jesus Christ's particular existence.

That such statements become consigned to postresurrection existence, at some perceived distance from what might be described as the *gravitas* of God's acting, results, I think, from a failure to understand witness as the "simplest," that is, the nature of God's own perfection. Focus falls on the priestly and kingly offices as belonging to eternity, with the prophetic office perceived as a relative and provisional act consigned to the time between the resurrection and Christ's final coming in glory. This gives insufficient weight to Jesus Christ's own life of witness as corresponding to the nature of God's own perfection and the corresponding completion of reconciliation. As witness narrates the oneness of this event, so it declares the nature of its perfection. The resurrection points back to the "absolutely *prevenient* 'history' which as the *opus Trinitatis internum ad extra* is in God Himself the eternal beginning of all His way and works."⁴² The resurrection declares the very nature of God from all eternity. God is complete in and for himself. Nothing adds to his perfection. Nothing accrues to God's being in his movement into the economy, for he already has an above and below within himself. Jesus Christ's resurrection, in other words, reveals God's missionary nature, for he reveals his active determination to be for and with the human. The active fellowship of the divine and the human in its unity itself witnesses to this protological reality. Likewise, the completion of reconciliation, as an act of God, corresponds to the nature of God's own perfection: it is a superfluous perfection, a light shining in the world as Jesus was himself sent from all eternity and as the Spirit was breathed. The protological does not exhaust the eschatological; it determines its form. Reconciliation corresponds to the missionary perfection of God. As the community of the resurrection, the church is itself missionary because it is called within this perfection and lives in conformity to the Son as empowered by the Spirit; it lives in the declarative fellowship of the divine and the human.

IV. MISSIONARY WITNESS AND THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

Though interpreters do not associate the language of mission with this movement, that the resurrection has for Barth this protological significance is nothing new. Indeed, it becomes a source of complaint.⁴³ To quote Nate Kerr, "This

⁴² Barth, *CD* IV/3.2, 484.

⁴³ See Nathan R. Kerr, *Christ, History and Apocalyptic: The Politics of Christian Mission* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 79–89.

urgeschichtlich characterization of the resurrection has the effect of claiming an ontological ‘completeness’ for Jesus of Nazareth’s identity which abstracts from its inherent historical contingency and unresolved narrative limitations. ...”⁴⁴ This complaint is illustrated by reference to the “almost complete absence” of any account of those “tragic complexities and discontinuities of this life,” such as Jesus’s temptation or his weeping tears of blood at Gethsemane.⁴⁵ These types of events are considered basic to shaping his “identity as distinctively *human* and *limited* by that humanity.”⁴⁶ Barth allows eternity to consume time and, with it, an account of historical and contingent humanity. Barth’s concern with the humanity *of God* provides a façade for an ongoing evacuation of the human.

Let us grant the general concern for a more populated description of both Jesus’s life and the community called by him. However, the highlighted instances that supposedly narrate Jesus’s particular “humanity” emerge as moments of solitary struggle, occasions of individuated piety. What qualifies these moments as especially indicative of Jesus Christ’s humanity? It would seem that the issue of his humanity is equally an issue of our humanity and, as such, an issue of the form of general human existence in relation to the divine. Because his humanity must correspond also to our humanity, this seemingly becomes distinguished from Jesus Christ’s “mission” of redemption as something belonging to his divinity alone. The New Testament admonitions that “no one has seen the Father except the Son” (Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 1:18; 6:46) maybe prompt an association between Jesus’s divinity and those historical actions that typify his mission. My suspicion here is that the identification of these “human” experiences corresponds to an assumption of human identity at some distance from the missionary setting of active human fellowship with the divine. That which is “*distinctively human*” in relation to God occurs apart from the moments of missionary engagement, in the moments of quiet and earnest contemplative separation. The true humanity of Jesus, however, is not his humanity in isolation. The concrete existence of the particular human being, Jesus of Nazareth, includes his being as the second person of the Trinity. His is a “being in a history. ... And what takes place in this history, and therefore in the being of Jesus Christ as such, is atonement. ... His being as God and human and God-human consists in the completed act of the reconciliation of man with God.”⁴⁷ Jesus Christ accomplishes the reconciliation of the world in the living unity of the divine and the human. Such is the distinct nature of his humanity.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 126–27.

To seek some particular account of Jesus's humanity in isolation from his divinity renders his identity oddly abstract in relation to his own history because it fails to take his act of witness as determinative for his humanity. Assuming that a proper human relationship to the divine consists of these moments of composed distinction, and the attendant reflective practices, directs attention away from the nature of Jesus's own witnessing humanity and its continuity with the "pastoral" structures he institutes with his disciples. David Demson is instructive at this point. For him, it is basic to the Christ's identity that he "chose others to participate actively in his mission of making effective ... reconciliation among all creatures."⁴⁸ This is properly part of Jesus's prophetic office. It is not that "Jesus first enacts the good of humans on their behalf, accomplishing the reconciliation of all creatures, and *then* chooses his witnesses to proclaim this enactment as the content of their message. Rather, during the course of this enactment or accomplishment he appoints and calls them, and only the commissioning or sending of them waits upon his accomplishment of reconciliation and his announcement of it. Ingredient in Jesus' identity are his appointment, calling, and commissioning of the Twelve."⁴⁹

In this way the import of the postresurrection sending is not disconnected from Jesus's life before the cross. The commissioning "includes and makes clear what was fully ingredient but hidden in the appointment and calling."⁵⁰ Though it is hidden until its declaration in the event of the resurrection, the prophetic office is not sequentially distinguished from the priestly and kingly offices. This, it would seem, has direct consequences for forming the church in correspondence to Jesus Christ's own acting, for the continuity between the missionary form of Jesus, his apostles, and the church of all ages.

We could follow Demson's treatment for a good distance but must content ourselves with a single observation: Jesus Christ's humanity needs to be narrated in terms of his mission, because his identity is the dynamic union of the human and the divine, and this life is one of witness. Reconciled human life in Jesus Christ, by extension, is not humanity in isolation. It is a life in active fellowship with the divine, and it is the nature of this fellowship that it takes the historical form of witness.

⁴⁸ David E. Demson, *Hans Frei and Karl Barth: Different Ways of Reading Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), ix.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ix–x.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

With the completion of reconciliation, other human beings are called to active participation in the definite form of Jesus Christ's own history. Peter, Paul, and the apostles are witnesses in relation to the action of God. This occurs because Jesus Christ is himself the true witness. This must remain at the forefront of our thinking because, for some commentators, Barth's account of witness is all too human, functioning as a critical mechanism for maintaining the distinction between the divine and the human. Reinhard Hütter argues that, for Barth, "the one true Church can only exist as an event in which, due to the Holy Spirit's action, the human witness fully coincides with its referent, God's graceful election of Christ. Yet this event occurs under the condition of time only '*je und je*.' Only eschatologically in the full consummation of all will the Church coincide perpetually with its referent. And that is precisely when the Church as a distinct community of witness will disappear because its vocation of witness has ended."⁵¹

What Hütter identifies is a supposed inconsistency concerning witness as the form of human relationship with Jesus Christ. On the one hand, the act of witness describes the event of the church only as it lives in fellowship with Jesus Christ. Precisely as a fellowship, this relationship is not a given, but is dependent on the act of the Spirit. On the other hand, the act of witness will terminate in the final *parousia* as the fulfillment of human hope and God's promises. One can indicate a proper provisionality of the church's witness here and now: the hypostatic union is true only of Jesus Christ; the church is a secondary subject participating in Jesus Christ's own history in the gift of the Spirit; the fallen condition of the church and its response of witness necessitate the continued prayer of confession and the submission to and celebration of the eucharistic feast. The nature of the church's witness to Jesus, in other words, does not share the immediacy of the Son's witness to the Father. Such distance is, however, not Hütter's concern. For him, because witness ceases precisely in the fullness of fellowship, it does not describe the nature of that fellowship itself. The act consists of pointing beyond the church to the object of its faith that, perforce, exists at some distance from it. Witness bespeaks an undue disconnect between the human community called by Jesus and the event of fellowship with him true of human beings here and now.

To affirm that the resurrection declares the living relationship of the above and below from all eternity is to undo this assumption of the temporal provisionality of witness. Witness characterizes the nature of God as he lives his own proper

⁵¹ Reinhard Hütter, "Karl Barth's 'Dialectical Catholicity': *Sic et Non*," *Modern Theology* 16, no. 2 (2000): 146.

life. The protological is equally the eschatological reality. In the eschaton, human fellowship with the divine will not be other than that which is eternally true of Jesus Christ. The distance Hütter interprets as denuding human agency itself properly belongs to the act of witness. Witness is not the act of the human alone. As declarative unity of the two natures, witness is the action of the asymmetrical fellowship of the divine with the human. Precisely as a fellowship, the two do not act in isolation. While asymmetrical (the divine initiates and the human responds), witness does not merge one partner into the other but liberates both to act according to what is proper to their natures. With the final *parousia* our hope will meet its reality. This does not mean the end of witness but the perfected doxological participation of the human in God's own life of witness.

V. THE RESURRECTION AS MISSIONARY EXISTENCE IN THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

The life of Jesus Christ, as divine and human, is one of witness. Reconciliation's completion corresponds to the nature of God's own perfection and is, as such, missionary in movement, calling, upbuilding, and sending a community that lives in the resurrection. This missionary response of the community Barth depicts as Jesus Christ in the exercise of his prophetic office. For Jenson, however, Barth's locating the gospel's objectivity in the resurrection of the Son occasions the most "tortuous dialectic" in his *Church Dogmatics*.⁵² Jenson seeks a fuller account of the Spirit with the concomitant form of Christian witness in which the church is itself the objective structuring of the gospel. The question of the Spirit is rightly the question of the objectivity of the human response to the gospel, the form of its missionary witness including its communal structuring, institutions, and practices. It seems to me, however, that the expected shift from the missionary apostles to the stable church mandates a certain form for the Spirit's acting. Barth's treatment of the Spirit does not follow this path. He offers an ecclesiological account of the church marked by certain freedoms in service to the missionary commission. Jenson interprets this as an avoidance of the church because Barth refuses to identify the Spirit with the church in a manner Jenson understands as necessary to Christian piety and the associated form of witness. The "necessity" has such force, in other words, that without this particular account of the Spirit's acting, Barth's ecclesiology appears absent of even the ordering elements basic to any human community.

⁵² Jenson, "You Wonder Where the Spirit Went," 297.

What I think Barth achieves, apart from a more exegetically robust treatment of the Spirit's acting,⁵³ is an account of the community with missionary movement basic to its structure. I do not mean by this that Barth places mission "at the center" of the church. Such suggestions often prioritize established definitions of mission over against established definitions of church. Mission, by this account, is characterized by an institutional mobility considered necessary to the proclamation of the gospel. It, in other words, is set in contrast to concerns for traditional church order and an account of witness located in stability, continuity, and maturity. Mobility and stability reflect two poles of mission method and are played off against each other (with the effect that discussions of a "missionary church" either make drastic and improbable recommendations or resolve the issue by reference to "leadership models"). Though it awaits population, what Barth initiates is a rethinking of church order shaped according to the mission dynamic of reconciliation. Stability, continuity, and maturity are reframed in terms of missionary movement because such are located in the transitioning activity of the Spirit.

In like manner to the Christological architecture of the resurrection, Barth's pneumatology in the doctrine of reconciliation includes a protological account determinative of an eschatological response. Barth begins his consideration of the role of the Spirit in the divine life with Pentecost in Acts 2, with the rushing descent of the Spirit from heaven and the endowment of human beings to be witnesses to the act of God in Christ.⁵⁴ The Spirit can so act, because, like Christ, this action is a repetition in our earthly history of what "God is in himself."⁵⁵ As Father and Son, distance and confrontation, encounter and partnership belong to the divine life. This distinction is not one of separation, or of neutrality. The triune life is not one of "two mutually conditioning factors in reciprocal operation."⁵⁶ The Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and of the Son is the "transition of this distance," the unity of this fellowship.⁵⁷ The self-knowledge of the Father and the Son is penetrated, according to Matthew 11:27, only as the

⁵³ Speaking of the shift in the understanding of the church that occurred perhaps as early as the late first century, Bosch notes that the movement from a mobile ministry gave way to a settled ministry. Such a movement included a revision of the acting of the Spirit. "Whereas the writings of Luke introduced the Holy Spirit particularly as the Spirit of mission, as the One who equipped the apostles (and Jesus) and guided them into missionary situations, the Spirit's work was now seen almost exclusively as that of building up the church in sanctity. The work of the Spirit was above all to purify and illumine every soul within the church. The Holy Spirit was the Spirit of truth, of light, of life, of love, but there was hardly any consciousness of the Spirit moving outward to bring good tidings to a wider world." Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 201.

⁵⁴ I am drawing here from Barth, *CD IV/2*, 339–59.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 341.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 345.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Son chooses to reveal the Father. This is the opening of the partnership of the divine life to history, and this is the act of the Spirit. God is in himself “history in partnership.”⁵⁸ This means, for Barth, “before *all* earthly history, yet also in it, [God] is the One who is also for us (in His *own* history) transition, mediation and communication, and therefore the One who creates and gives life, the answer and solution to our problem.”⁵⁹ As it is God himself who transitions the gap between the above and the below, “He Himself is the pledge that it is really bridged.”⁶⁰ This is the gift of the Spirit: the drawing of human beings into Jesus Christ’s own history and thus into the life of God. As God’s proper life is one of witness, so the human beings become witnesses by virtue of living in fellowship with the divine.

As reconciliation corresponds to the nature of God’s own perfection, the proto-logical declaration of the Son in the resurrection and of the Spirit at Pentecost does not simply point back to a God cordoned off in eternity. The missionary determination of God’s own life determines the corresponding missionary nature of the Christian community. The ontological affirmation informs the nature of the present eschatological reality. Reconciliation as a completed act of God, and so both a *fact* and an *event*,⁶¹ means that Christian life in the reconciliation must itself form in the nature of this completion. “Reconciliation generally and as such, does not merely take place for itself in a special sphere closed off by the resistance and contradiction which it encounters. On the contrary, it takes place as it establishes Christian knowledge in the world and in and among the people who are reconciled in its occurrence.”⁶² Reconciliation exists within the community only insofar as the community moves out in reconciliation. There is an essential continuity between the internal and external moments of the community’s existence.

“Life in the promise of the Spirit” means that the Spirit structures the church according to the realism of Easter. The reality of the resurrection came to the apostles in the form of the “*missionary command*: ‘Go you into *all the world*!’ It was for this that the Resurrected one appeared.”⁶³ Given the dominant depiction of the missionary response of the apostles as historically relative, and the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 344, 345.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 345.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ For an expansion of this point, see John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 215–26.

⁶² Barth, CD IV/3.1, 214.

⁶³ Barth, KD IV/3.1, 350 (my translation); ET, 303.

coordinated reduction of mission to a command that occurs external to the essential structures of the church, it is here necessary to reassert the ontological nature of this eschatological orientation. To quote Barth, the “*ontological connection*” between the human Jesus and human being takes the historical form of “the gathering and upbuilding of the *community* of those who acknowledge Jesus Christ ... as a *necessity* grounded in Himself,” and “this community is sent out and entrusted with the task of *mission* in the world, again with a *necessity* grounded in Himself. Jesus Christ would not be who He is if He lacked His community, and if this community lacked, or was even capable of lacking, a missionary character.”⁶⁴ Jesus Christ calls, edifies, and sends the missionary community as himself the living history of the divine and human fellowship. The missionary form of this fellowship is no idle implication formulated beside an otherwise defined substance of reconciliation. There is no community that exists before the commission and that is only secondarily sent and so only by derivation gains a missionary character. The Christian community is a missionary community or it is not a community of the completed reconciliation of the world. Such is the nature of called human beings in active participation in the history of Jesus Christ.

Reconciliation, precisely in this missionary movement of encounter, constitutes the communal nature of the church as “the gathered and self-gathering community.”⁶⁵ Negatively considered, the proper work of the Spirit in creating witnesses does not “merely lead to the blind alley of a new qualification, enhancement, deepening and enrichment of this being of the community as such.”⁶⁶ Christian fellowship is no inward orientation occupied with reconciling relationships for which the external witness forms as a simple gestalt of this relationality. Such a monologue places the church external to the dynamic asymmetrical giving and receiving of reconciled human relationship with the divine. This equally precludes any notion of “habitual having,” since this “would be a possession outside the divine giving and ... receiving at God’s hand.”⁶⁷ Nor should the church depict its life and configure its practices toward this fictitious end.

Positively considered, the missionary dynamic of calling people to fellowship with Jesus Christ, to becoming witnesses in the active unity of the divine and the human, is as true of the community’s own public gathering as a community

⁶⁴ Barth, *KD* IV/2, 305 (my translation); ET, 275.

⁶⁵ Barth, *KD* IV/1, 728 (my translation); ET, 652.

⁶⁶ Barth, *CD* IV/3.2, 764.

⁶⁷ Barth, *CD* III/4, 763.

as it is of its gathering movement in the world. The act of witness is itself the indicator of Christian maturity, an obvious position if witness is defined as the living fellowship of the divine and the human. Edification occurs as the Spirit “draws and impels and presses” the community beyond itself, for it is “only as it *follows* this drawing and impelling [that it is] the real community of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁸ Mobility is properly part of church order, which is defined by Barth as the “upbuilding of the community as the attestation of the reconciliation of the world with God accomplished in Jesus Christ. ...”⁶⁹ Barth can thus conclude that an “essentially missionary” church is not an “immature, but mature, church.”⁷⁰

Such an affirmation might be interpreted as reflective of a general disregard for the church in its empirical reality. One could indicate the remarkable freedoms Barth understands as belonging to the community in service to its active participation in the reconciliation of the world.⁷¹ To do so might be interpreted as a further occasion of ecclesiological reductionism. But this is where Barth’s treatment of the Spirit comes to the fore. The transitioning role of the Spirit includes the unity of community’s structure in its outward expression. The Spirit is the “summoning power of the divine promise, which points the community beyond herself, which calls her to transcend herself and in that way to be in truth the community of God—in truth, i.e., as she bears *witness* to the truth known within her, as she knows herself to be charged with this witness and *sent out* to establish it.”⁷² The transitioning of the Spirit includes the continuity of the necessary institutional practices in the outward movement of witnessing to the truth that these structures serve. Without this outward movement, the structures do not themselves bear the fullness of the truth to which they witness. Without the structures, the witness is not itself that of the community of reconciliation. The Spirit can be understood in close relation to the establishment of ecclesial institutions, but this is precisely in the mobility of missionary witness. Following the third Barmen thesis, the church proclaims both with its message and with its order. The ordering of church structures after the nature of reconciliation’s completion, as an expansive and declarative participation in Jesus Christ’s prophetic office, is the proper action of the Spirit. Given the questions of identity, institutional structures, community formation, and indigeneity occasioned by the rise of southern Christianity, Barth’s pneumatology appears to make a potentially robust contribution.

⁶⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/3.2, 764.

⁶⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/1, 678.

⁷⁰ Barth, *KD* IV/4, xii (my translation); ET, xi.

⁷¹ Flett, *The Witness of God*, 280–84.

⁷² Barth, *CD* IV/1, 152.

VI. CONCLUSION

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a declaration of the very nature of God. God is the God for the human from all eternity and to all eternity. This is his glory. Such is the nature of God's own perfection that his "becoming simply confirms the perfection of this being."⁷³ That is, the resurrection from the dead declares the nature of God as he lives his own proper life: God is a missionary God. As the resurrection declares the nature of this God, so the resurrection propels this flowing out into the streets and alleys of the world: he is risen, he is risen indeed. In him, God completed once for all the reconciliation of the world. This completion corresponds to the nature of God's own perfection. It is a becoming completion, a superfluous eloquent completion. Insofar as it is true, it must become true. The community called by him is to live in the realism of Easter, in the promise of the Spirit. Jesus Christ in the exercise of his prophetic ministry is the public revelation of who he is as very God and very human. This living fellowship of the divine and the human is a history of witness, not as a byproduct, but as the nature of that fellowship's perfection. Jesus Christ calls other human beings as secondary subjects to participate in his own history. The Holy Spirit is the power of transition drawing the human community called by God into the fellowship of reconciliation, thus making them witnesses to the mighty acts of God in Christ. Far from protology exhausting history, the church receives a determined form. The community that lives in fellowship with God must correspond to the nature of God's own perfection; it must correspond to the completion of reconciliation. The Christian community is a missionary community or it is not the community of the resurrection. Church structures and order serve this missionary commission beside which there is no other church. This is not to place mobility over against stability but to structure the church in correspondence to reconciliation's completion. It is the transitioning power of the Spirit to maintain the unity of the witness known within the community of God's reconciliation as this witness moves out in reconciliation.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The cry of desolation is but the first word of Psalm 22. The last word is this: "Future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it." ■

⁷³ Barth, *CD I/1*, 427.

Lecture

Miraculous Objects and Their Theorists: A Glimpse into Attitudes toward the Holy in the Late Middle Ages

by Caroline Walker Bynum

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Miracles were an important part of medieval Christianity. Although Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries debated whether the “age of miracles” had ended with Christ’s ascension or with the triumph of Christianity under Constantine, most medieval preachers and theologians thought miracles continued into their own day. Readers of this journal will no doubt be familiar from European painting with the sort of miracles told regularly of medieval saints. They allegedly healed the sick, cast out demons, afflicted Christianity’s enemies with paralysis or other bodily ills, and occasionally raised the dead. Although the virtues of self-discipline, prayerful contemplation, and loving service of neighbor were also important, miracles were crucial signs, even proofs, of sanctity.

In this essay, I do not want to talk about miracles generally. Rather I want to discuss a particular kind of miracle: the transformation miracle—that is, a miracle in which material or bodily stuff metamorphoses into something else, often remaining as such and becoming a place of pilgrimage or cult. Examples include statues that weep tears or change color, communion wafers and chalices that spill blood, body parts that regenerate, fragments of bone or hair that

¹ Much of this lecture is taken from my forthcoming book *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (Zone Books), to appear in the summer of 2011.

supposedly come alive, and bits of wax, stone, or paper that carry power across distances and bring about physical healing. I argue that such miracles became more common in the late Middle Ages (i.e., in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) and were an aspect of a general and increasing emphasis on the material as a place for encounter with and manifestation of the sacred. I also argue that such miracles were an opportunity and a problem for medieval Christians. It is those possibilities and problems—and the understanding of the divine and the material that lay behind them—that I wish to discuss here. But, first, a little more explanation of the types of holy matter I have in mind.

There are four types of holy objects on which I am focusing in this discussion: images, relics, contact relics, and what German historians call *Dauerwunder* (lasting miracles). The first type—living or animated images—are statues or frescoes thought to alter physically or to come alive in response to the needs of Christians for reward, succor, or revenge. They are especially phenomena of the late fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, although the objects themselves often predate the moment of their animation by several hundred years. In Prato in north Italy in 1484, for example, a child supposedly saw the Virgin Mary come down from a wall to clean an abandoned prison. Crowds who flocked to the spot saw the image change color, weep, sweat blood, and open and close its eyes. Within a few weeks, the bishop authenticated the site, and a church was soon built around it. There are a number of contemporaneous cases in northern Italy and in Germany, especially eastern and southern Germany.²

In some cases, cures were produced by such animated images at a distance through the simple act of an adherent's prayer to the Virgin. But sometimes the power of the image was itself transferred by physical object. In the case of Mary of the Prison in Prato, pilgrim tokens—either woodcuts or little lead replicas of the fresco—were touched to the mouths or bodies of the sick and produced cures. Into the seventeenth century, engraved images of the Madonna of the Garden near Genoa were said to work miracles by touch.³ Even in the early modern period (when pilgrimage tended to be stimulated by reported appearances of the

² On Prato and other Italian cases, see *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Erik Thunø and Gerhard Wolf, *Analecta Romana Supplement 35* (Rome: "L'erma" di Bretschneider, 2004). For two German cases, see Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 14.

³ Robert Maniura, "The Images and Miracles of Santa Maria delle Carceri," in *The Miraculous Image*, ed. Thunø and Wolf, 87–89 and 95; and Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser, "Translations of the Miraculous: Cult Images and Their Representations in Early Modern Liguria," in *The Miraculous Image*, 206–207.

Virgin Mary), the focal point of devotion was usually a physical image (statue or painting) to which the vision supposedly pointed or an object (such as a stone or girdle) she left behind. Of 137 medieval and early modern Spanish sites studied by William Christian Jr., 111 commemorate the finding of an image or object indicated by an apparition; only fourteen are sites of the vision itself.⁴ Moreover, images sometimes produced holy stuff to defend themselves or bring about cures. The tomb of Agnes of Montepulciano produced healing manna. In the fifteenth century at Neukirchen in Bavaria, a Hussite struck a statue of the Virgin in the head and it spewed forth blood in protest. The statue, with the sword still imbedded, was venerated for centuries.⁵

Images sometimes engendered or reproduced their own details. Stigmata—the wounds of Christ supposedly appearing on the bodies of the devout—are first reported in the late twelfth century. They are, of course, transformation miracles themselves, but what is even more interesting is the fact that they are usually depicted by artists as impressed on the bodies of saints not by Christ but by an object, the crucifix. In the numerous representations of the stigmatization of St. Francis of Assisi, the body that stamps Christ's wounds into Francis's hands, feet, and side is a body that hangs on a cross hovering in the air. Even where the cross itself is not depicted, the Christ figure, with arms rigidly outspread and feet together, floats as if it is the carved corpus of the devotional object, and red or black lines connect it to the points on Francis's body where it incises itself into his flesh.

In what might seem a gloss on such depictions, the great thirteenth-century theologian St. Bonaventure described the event. Bonaventure tells us that, on a certain morning about the time of the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, Francis saw a seraph bearing a crucifix. And when Francis came down from the mountain, he "bore with him the image of the Crucified, which was depicted not on tablets of stone or on panels of wood by the hands of a craftsman, but imprinted (or impressed or stamped) in the members of his body by the finger of the living God." In Bonaventure's account, God stamps or imprints a crucifix in Francis, and Francis himself becomes a carving or inscription made by God

⁴ William Christian Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 15–19.

⁵ For the rains of manna, see Raymond of Capua, "Life of Catherine of Siena," part 2, chapter 12, paragraphs 326–28, *Acta sanctorum*, ed. J. Bollandus and G. Henschenius, April, vol. 3 (Paris: Palmé, 1866), 943–44. On Neukirchen, see Horst Bredekamp, *Kunst als Medium sozialer Konflikte: Bilderkämpfe von der Spätantike bis zur Hussitenrevolution* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), 300; and Karl Kolb, *Vom Heiligen Blut: Eine Bilddokumentation der Wallfahrt und Verehrung* (Würzburg: Echter, 1980), 80.

in living flesh.⁶ The passage is a literalization of 2 Corinthians 3:3, where Paul says that the Spirit writes “not in tablets of stone but in the fleshly tablets of the heart.” Whereas 2 Corinthians interiorizes the exterior carving of the tablets on Mt. Sinai, Bonaventure, so to speak, re-exteriorizes—or materializes—the Biblical passage.

The fourteenth century provides us with a more amusing story of holy reproduction. According to the canonization process of Peter of Luxembourg (for the year 1388–89), a priest applied an image of Peter to the stomach of Charlotte of Bourbon, who was suffering a difficult labor. Not only was the child born healthy but it also bore the features of Peter of Luxembourg as displayed on the image.⁷ The theme of imprinting goes back, of course, to the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., Genesis 30) and to antiquity, but the element of touch found here is unusual. The shape of the holy is conveyed not by simple seeing of colored rods or powerful faces but by actual physical contact.

Three other types of holy matter—relics, contact relics, and the Eucharist—became important in Christianity before the period in which animated images proliferated so extravagantly. Veneration of relics—the remains of holy people, first the martyrs and, later, spiritual figures such as miracle-working monks or female visionaries—originated in the fourth century or even earlier. The practice flourished throughout the Middle Ages, but emphasis on the “bodiliness” of the remnants increased visually as well as theologically after the twelfth century. In the early period, relics were usually housed in jeweled caskets shaped like purses. In the twelfth century, containers shaped like churches became popular. These containers not only hid the fragmentation martyrs’ bodies might have undergone; they also evoked the gathered community of Christians.

Over the course of the Middle Ages, however, actual division and distribution of holy bodies became more frequent. By the thirteenth century, relics came to be displayed in what German historians call “speaking reliquaries”—containers shaped like arms, feet, a head, and so forth. The shape supposedly indicated that they housed body parts. Although historians now realize that arm, feet, rib,

⁶ Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior S. Francisci Assisiensis et Eiusdem Legenda Minor*, chap. 13, section 5, ed. Collegium S. Bonaventurae (Florence-Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1941), 109. On depictions of stigmatization, see Chiara Frugoni, *Francesco e l’Invenzione delle Stimmate: Una Storia per Parole e Immagini Fino a Bonaventura e Giotto* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1993).

⁷ André Vauchez, “Les Images Saints: Représentations Iconographiques et Manifestations du Sacré,” in *Saints, Prophètes et Visionnaires: Le Pouvoir Surnaturel au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), 81–82. On imprinting, see David Freedberg, in *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 2–3.

and head reliquaries often did not contain the part they “spoke,” they certainly emphasized a body part *as part*.⁸ Crystal monstrances both manifested the bodily nature of what was inside (the devout could see the bone fragments or teeth as fragments) and commented on their actual or potential glorification in resurrection by surrounding them with incorruptible gold and gems.

Especially in the late Middle Ages, stories were told of relics that—like images—came alive and even caused transformations. For example, the hairs of the early thirteenth-century saint Mary of Oignies were said to writhe as if living (although preserved apart from her body) and to cure the sick.⁹ The holy woman Isabelle of France was said to have provided a new fingernail from the dust of her tomb for someone who had lost one.¹⁰ In Naples, since the late fourteenth century, the blood of St. Januarius (a supposed martyr of the early fourth century) has been claimed to liquefy in early May and on the saint’s feast day in mid-September; on one occasion it supposedly stopped an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius.¹¹ To underscore my argument about chronology, it is worth noting that it apparently took the relic a thousand years to decide to come alive.

A third, closely related type of holy matter—contact relics—was also important throughout the Middle Ages. The faithful revered not just bodies and body parts but also pieces of cloth, dust, or wash water from the bodies and the tombs of saints. For example, a nightcap knitted by Isabelle of France was revered as a relic.¹²

Contact relics of Christ and Mary (e.g., pieces of Mary’s mantel) were also revered, as were effluvial (i.e., exuded) relics (such as Christ’s blood and Mary’s milk). Indeed, associated relics were particularly important in the case of Jesus and Mary, because their actual bodies were assumed to be unavailable, having been taken up into heaven. In the early Middle Ages, the so-called “true cross” (i.e., the cross of the Crucifixion) was especially venerated; later, the sweat cloth and other instruments of the Crucifixion eclipsed the relics of saints.

⁸ Anton Legner, *Reliquien in Kunst und Kult zwischen Antike und Aufklärung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995); Cynthia Hahn, “The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries,” *Gesta* 36, no. 1 (1997): 20–31.

⁹ Thomas of Cantimpré, *Supplementum* (to *The Life of Mary of Oignies*), chap. 1, para. 6–7 and 14, *Acta sanctorum*, June, vol. 5 (1867), 574–75 and 577.

¹⁰ Sean L. Field, *Isabelle of France: Capetian Sanctity and Franciscan Identity in the Thirteenth Century* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 135.

¹¹ Jean-Paul Roux, *Le Sang: Mythes, Symboles et Réalités* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 202–203.

¹² Field, *Isabelle of France*, 167.

Like bodily relics, crucifixion relics sometimes underwent periodic transformation. In the Greek Church, for example, stories were told of thorn relics flowering at Passiontide. In the fourteenth century, the Italian holy woman Alda of Siena carved for herself a wooden nail to imitate a Crucifixion relic, and even this imitation relic was said to ooze sap as if it were alive.¹³

Effluvial and quasi-bodily relics, such as the holy foreskin from Christ's circumcision, Christ's blood, and Mary's milk, also reached new prominence in the late Middle Ages and worked miracles. Like the blood of St. Januarius, relics of Christ's blood were reputed to liquefy. In the fourteenth century, for example, Pope Clement V granted an indulgence (a certificate of a certain number of days off in purgatory) to those who viewed the liquefaction of the blood relic at Bruges, which allegedly occurred every Friday.¹⁴

The fourth type of holy matter, the Eucharist, was treated throughout the Middle Ages as if it were a bodily relic of Christ.¹⁵ Although theologians and ecclesiastical authorities were sometimes dubious about the practice, consecrated wafers were buried in altars, along with and in place of relics. They were used in healings and to authenticate oaths. From the twelfth century on, visionaries came increasingly to see the figure of Christ—sometimes as a baby or a suffering man, sometimes as mutilated flesh—in the bread and wine. Then, in the late thirteenth century, a new kind of Eucharistic holy matter became prominent, which German historians call *Dauerwunder*. We find stories of the consecrated bread and wine not only becoming visible flesh and blood to reward devotion or reproach doubters but also remaining as miraculous stuff. What is important to note here is that, in early miracle stories, the transformed stuff appears and disappears. Indeed, in the typical account, the celebrant, horrified, prays for it to revert to its original form of bread and wine. After about the year 1200, it lasts.

Sometimes thought to be manifestations of God's power and love, such Eucharistic miracles were more and more frequently seen as divine responses to abuse of various kinds, such as theft by criminals, conjuring by ignorant women, and ritual impurity on the part of priests. As they became more sinister, they also

¹³ On thorn relics, see Michele Bacci, "Relics of the Pharos Chapel: A View from the Latin West," in *Eastern Christian Relics*, ed. Alekseĭ Lidov (Moscow: Progress-Tradition, 2003), 234–48. For Alda's nail, see "Life of Alda (or Aldobrandesca) of Siena," *Acta sanctorum*, April, vol. 3 (1866), 474.

¹⁴ On Bruges, see Jacques Toussaert, *Le Sentiment Religieux en Flandre à la Fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1963), 261. On blood relics generally, see Caroline W. Bynum, "The Blood of Christ in the Later Middle Ages," *Church History*, 71, no. 4 (2002): 685–715.

¹⁵ Godefridus J. C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction, Studies in the History of Christian Thought* 63 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995).

became bloodier; wafers were thought to turn into bleeding meat and chalices, to fill with blood and run over, staining altar cloths. Especially in certain areas of Europe such as Bavaria and northern Germany, *Dauerwunder* were increasingly anti-Jewish libels.¹⁶ Communion wafers were thought to erupt in blood because they had been stabbed and fragmented by Jews wishing to test, or conjure with, them. Such hosts were understood as material objects by which Jews spread anti-Christian activity from town to town. They were even used in Christian judicial proceedings (ecclesiastical and secular) as physical evidence of Jewish misdeeds. At the trial of alleged desecrators at Sternberg in northern Germany in 1492, bits of violated bread, the nails used to perpetrate abuse, and wood from a table into which the blood supposedly soaked were actually introduced as physical evidence against the accused. Thus, in the same period in which statues and wall paintings were thought to come alive in order to bestow benefits or protest abuse, other physical objects such as relics and consecrated wafers began in new and more literal ways to announce the holy within them.

All this made learned theologians quite uneasy. To put it simply, theologians were caught. On the one hand, there was the danger of idolatry. After all, the second commandment said quite clearly: “Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing” (Exod. 20.4–5). On the other hand, there were the doctrines of creation, incarnation, and bodily resurrection, which asserted the possibility of sacred presence in matter. Hence, theologians tended to talk out of both sides of their mouths about the increasing materiality of Christian devotion.

Some struggled to avoid the suggestion that images could in any sense depict the sacred. Images were, they argued, mere signs pointing to an exemplar; they were only triggers that directed the attention of the faithful to an ultimately *un-seeable* divine. Some spiritual advisers counseled against overreliance on images, and dissident groups (such as Lollards and Hussites) went so far as to reject or even smash statues, their very violence suggesting how seductive the highly tactile art of the late Middle Ages could be.¹⁷ Yet university theologians attacked Lollard

¹⁶ Peter Browe, “Die Hostienschändungen der Juden im Mittelalter,” *Römische Quartalschrift* 34, no. 4 (1926): 67–97; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

¹⁷ William R. Cook, “The Question of Images and the Hussite Movement in Prague,” *Cristianesimo nella Storia: Ricerche Storiche, Esetiche, Teologiche* 3 (1982): 329–42; Thomas A. Fudge, “The ‘Crown’ and the ‘Red Gown’: Hussite Popular Religion,” in *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400–1800*, ed. Robert W. Scribner and Trevor Johnson (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 38–57; Margaret Aston, *England’s Iconoclasts*, vol. 1, *Laws against Images* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), esp. chap. 4; and Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

and Hussite iconoclasm even more vehemently than they castigated the credulity of popular image devotion; confessors increasingly taught their advisees to meditate before both actual religious objects and visualizations in the mind's eye; popes gave indulgences to those who visited miraculous images.

Images are not the only matter about which theologians were ambivalent. They jumped through intellectual hoops to mitigate other implications of the idea that the holy was instantiated in matter. The great thirteenth-century theologian Thomas Aquinas, for example, explained that a relic is not the living body of the saint, "on account of its difference of form." That is, the relic is no longer informed by the saint's soul (which is in heaven). Like an image, a relic should be venerated for that toward which it points—in this case, not the saint at all but God, who works wonders through it. Yet a relic *is* the saint, says Aquinas, "by identity of matter, which is destined to be reunited with its form."¹⁸ In honoring bits of saints, we revere physical stuff that will be reassembled, resurrected, animated, and glorified at the end of time. In other words, the relic both is and is not the saint.

Aquinas and some who followed him held that there could not be bodily or quasi-bodily relics of Christ, such as the holy foreskin or vials of his blood. Christ's whole body had already ascended into heaven; hence no part could be left behind without threatening his perfection. But a number of other theologians defended such relics. They maintained that Christ could have left bits of his blood or flesh behind as traces to stir up enthusiasm at times of crisis or lukewarm religiosity. Moreover, the late Middle Ages saw popular enthusiasm for the sort of effluvial relics these theologians defended. A number of visionaries and devotional writers revered with special intensity such somatic presences. Pope Innocent III explicitly refused to doubt the foreskin relic, and later popes supported it with indulgences.

Dauerwunder presented even more of a conundrum. Some scholastic writers went so far as to argue that the body and blood of Christ could never be seen. "Transubstantiation" as an explanation of Eucharistic change had been required at the Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215, and "transubstantiation" meant that only the substance of the elements (what they were by definition) changed; the accidents (i.e., the appearance) remained the same. Hence, if an individual or

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, part 4 (part 3), question 25, article 6, in *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, ed. Roberto Busa, 7 vols. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), vol. 2, 808–809. See also *ibid.*, part 4 (part 3), question 15, article 10, objection 3, vol. 2, 794.

even a group saw a host or a communion cup change to blood or flesh, they were not (according to this theory) seeing what was really there. For essence or substance is not seeable; what is seeable is accidents. Appearances in the Eucharist, whether transient or long-lasting, must be—if not illusions or frauds—either the result of special miracles worked by God in the imaginations of viewers or new “red things” created in bread and cup to enhance faith.¹⁹

Moreover, from the Carolingian period to the end of the Middle Ages, there were spiritual writers for whom presence was experienced and authenticated exactly by its spiritual inwardness, not its physical “graspability.” The author of the early fourteenth-century devotional dialogue *Schwester Katrei*, for example, remarked that if we were really to see God in the Eucharist, it would break our eyes.²⁰ A number of theologians and devotional writers hypothesized that God had chosen to hide Eucharistic presence in bread and wine exactly because of a natural human horror at blood. Nor was skepticism about the literal presence of the divine in matter limited to intellectuals and contemplatives. There were ordinary Christians, too, who doubted the more extravagant claims for *Dauerwunder*, and not only because they suspected fraud. We find pilgrimage accounts from the late Middle Ages in which travelers expressed doubts about the claims of shrine attendants both to the possession of miraculous objects and to the healings they supposedly produced.

Yet all orthodox theologians agreed that the holy could appear in matter. After consecration, the Eucharistic elements were not only signs or mementoes. They were Christ: Christ human and Christ divine. Visionary nuns might be accused of hysteria or of faking specific revelations. Individual local pastors might be convicted of fabricating *Dauerwunder* in order to promote pilgrimage and garner revenues. But it was hard to reject all arguments for the authenticity of Eucharistic visions and miracles. The real presence of Christ in consecrated wafer and cup could not—at least not without coming under suspicion of heresy—be denied. Hence, if Christ were really present, an omnipotent God could surely signal or manifest this in a variety of ways, sometimes quite shocking and literal.

As I hope this exposition has suggested, the holy matter that proliferated in presence and in visibility in Europe in the later Middle Ages was both an opportunity and a problem. For lay people, cloistered monks and nuns, and many local

¹⁹ Peter Browe, “Die scholastische Theorie der eucharistischen Verwandlungswunder,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* 110 (1929): 305–332.

²⁰ Cited in Barbara Newman, “The Visionary Texts and Visual Worlds of Religious Women,” in *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Marti, trans. Dietlinde Hamburger (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 170.

clergy, it was an occasion for focusing personal piety, fomenting new pilgrimages, and refuting dissident critiques of established cults. But it was also a threat to ecclesiastical authorities who found it difficult to manage images, relics, and bloody Eucharistic wafers that might crop up, or erupt into new forms, without any official prompting. In what prelates, preachers, and polemicists wrote, it is clear that they often saw such devotions as a threat to the church's control, despite their attempts to use them to foster allegiance to specific monasteries, dioceses, or pilgrimage sites.

We cannot, of course, take miracle stories literally. This is not simply because we must bracket questions about their ultimate cause, but also because the stories were often composed long after the supposed event and for polemical purposes. Indeed, a surprising number of miracle accounts were made in the sixteenth century by Protestant scholars who exaggerated the miraculous in order to accuse Catholics of credulity. Nonetheless, the stories fall into broad patterns that are suggestive of social facts.

Animated images were usually said to appear to people of lowly or marginal status, especially children, and frequently in out-of-the-way places. Eucharistic visions, received more often by women than by men, often functioned to point an accusing finger at corrupt priests and were frequently received when clergy withheld the sacrament or other sorts of spiritual comfort from the women.²¹ *Dauerwunder* were usually alleged to be the result of (either unknowing or deliberate) misuse of the wafer by servants, especially female servants, criminals, or Jews. Such stories suggest that transformation miracles were often occasions on which ordinary Christians claimed to come into unmediated and awe-inspiring contact with the holy. The stories also reflect occasions on which Christians did abuse, steal, or attempt to work magic with relics or wafers. At Zehdenick in northern Germany, for example, a miracle supposedly occurred when a woman stole a host to bury under her beer keg so her beer would be better than that of her neighbors. Blood bubbled up from the earth where she buried it and was collected by the faithful as a relic. When a similar miracle occurred at Halberstadt, the ecclesiastical authorities tried to take the bloody chalice and cloth away, but the blood flowed again to protest being moved.²² Such stories demonstrate both popular encounters with holy matter and resistance on the part of some ordinary Christians to clerical efforts to manipulate it in order to stimulate or repress devotion.

²¹ The classic work is still Peter Browe, *Die eucharistischen Wunder des Mittelalters*, Breslauer Studien zur historischen Theologie N.F. 4 (Breslau: Müller & Seiffert, 1938).

²² Caroline W. Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 53–54 and 58–59.

Despite the important hints they give of sociopolitical context, narratives of transformation miracles are not transparent accounts. They were constructed to stereotype certain groups as impious, superstitious, or vicious. The way in which shrine attendants recorded miracles, or hagiographers and chroniclers wrote about saints, suggests that clerical authorities feared anticlerical reactions and projected those fears onto outsiders, scapegoating lower class women, working men, religious dissidents, and above all Jews. Behind some of the accounts of Eucharistic miracles lie pogroms and Christian efforts to find excuses for them. A number of reports of *Dauerwunder* from the late thirteenth to the fifteenth century are stories fabricated significantly after lynchings of Jews in order to justify the earlier events. By the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such stories were often circulated in preparation for judicial proceedings against Jews.²³

The politics of transformation miracles were thus quite complicated. Whether or not they were anti-Jewish libels, the supposed animations of holy objects provided occasions for blame and persecution as well as for access to succor and healing. Not only did holy stuff proliferate; its very lability became a mechanism of accusation. I give a single example of the complex ways in which animated matter was problematic, both in its perceived capacity to reproach and blame and in its susceptibility to manipulation for ends pious and impious. This is the famous case of the Wilsnack hosts.²⁴

The originating event at Wilsnack occurred in 1383 when three miraculously preserved and blood-spotted wafers appeared in the ruins of a village church after it had been burned to the ground by a predatory knight. Offered as a promise of rebirth to the community by its priest, and perhaps indeed connected with a local harvest festival, the objects triggered an enthusiastic pilgrimage that lasted more than a hundred years and drew a wide variety of people from all over northern Europe. Soon after 1383, however, the hosts were suspected by the authorities in Magdeburg of being a fraud. Conflict over their authenticity became the occasion both for sophisticated theological debate at several major synods and councils and for struggle over pilgrimage revenues, local peacekeeping, and other matters of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Archepiscopal authorities in Magdeburg opposed the prestige and power given the little church of Wilsnack by its pilgrimage, but the bishop of Havelberg and the electors of Brandenburg adamantly supported it. Arguments against the pilgrimage emanating from both the archdiocese and the university in Prague to the south erupted repeatedly in the fifteenth cen-

²³ Heiko Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation*, trans. James I. Porter (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

²⁴ On Wilsnack, see Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 25-45.

ture and were clearly, among other things, a contest between German and Czech nationalisms. Papal legations, led by such powerful figures as the saints Nicholas of Cusa and John of Capistrano, became involved. Criticism of the cult came not only from the highest levels of the church but also from a number of ordinary pilgrims who, in the accounts of their journeys, tell of faked miracles and question improbable metamorphoses (such as the alleged transformation of pilgrims' staves into swords when the pilgrims were attacked by robbers).

What I wish to call attention to here is not only the political maneuvering of the many parties involved but also the arguments that were mounted for and against the hosts for over a hundred years after their supposed appearance. The most virulent phase of the controversy occurred in the 1440s. In addition to asserting that the former priest (now deceased) had orchestrated the miracle—a charge that invited, of course, the countercharge that opponents had lied about the priest's confession—polemicists against the hosts claimed that there was “nothing red there,” either in 1443 when they were inspected or originally. The problem was not so much moral turpitude and manipulation by the priest, they said; it was that there was no miraculous matter at Wilsnack, only mold and spiderwebs. In other words, there had never been any transformation. From Jan Hus to Nicolas of Cusa, many theologians asserted specifically that what was in the monstrance was at most only a “colored thing,” not Christ's blood; moreover, they saw matter's tendency toward deterioration as a threat not only to miracle hosts but even to ordinary consecrated ones. In a decree of 1451, the papal legate, Nicolas of Cusa, warned: “Transformed hosts should be consumed by the celebrating priest in communion rather than that the sacred Eucharist given to us as a divine gift for spiritual refection should be permitted to disintegrate through the corruption of the species.” But we note that even Nicolas of Cusa does call the wafers in question “transformed hosts.”²⁵

And Wilsnack had its supporters, theorists as well as politicians. There were those who argued that Christ could have left blood behind at the resurrection; hence, it could appear on consecrated hosts. Indeed in a sort of desubstantiation, the blood on hosts could be present as accidents without substance, they argued; in other words, the substance of Christ's blood could ascend to glory, leaving its accidents behind, and that (the accidents) was what the faithful saw in the host.

To proponents of the miracle, such holy matter was useful exactly because it accused as well as revealed. One of the earliest stories connected to Wilsnack

²⁵ Adolph Friedrich Riedel, ed., *Codex diplomaticus Brandenburgensis: Sammlung der Urkunden, Chroniken und sonstigen Quellenschriften für die Geschichte der Mark Brandenburg und ihrer Regenten*, 41 vols. in 32 (Berlin: Morin, 1838–69), section A 2, document 17, 152–56.

told of the miracle hosts bleeding again to ward off the injury of double consecration when the bishop arrived to say mass with them. A sixteenth-century theologian argued: miraculous blood cries out against sin and abuse because it was shed innocent. Or, as another polemicist put it, blood miracles are horrible, with a horrible message, because they are signs of God's wrath at sin.

Thus, as the case of Wilsnack makes clear, material miracles were both problem and opportunity for religious authorities, who wished to educate and control, just as they were both problem and opportunity for layfolk, who wanted access to God. Sometimes efforts to assert the cultural hegemony of orthodox Christianity, such events also sometimes involved—and were often feared to involve—resistance to ecclesiastical authority or to orthodoxy. Moreover, for both groups—authorities and layfolk—miraculous objects functioned to focus persecution, lynching, and judicial murder. Thus, holy matter was a tool in the deployment, and the questioning, of ecclesiastical and social power.

But transformation miracles involved not only questions of power and control; they also involved questions of the meaning of human embodiment and its place in a material world. Behind claims to and belief in such miracles lay certain basic assumptions about the divine and the material. The first such assumption was the doctrine of creation itself—the belief that God made the world *ex nihilo*. If God could create, then surely he could recreate. All things were possible to God. Thus, no medieval thinker completely denied miracles. Although Christian theologians did formulate an understanding of miracle as that which occurred above, beyond, or counter to the regularities of nature God also established, they continued the New Testament tradition of understanding miracles as “signs” of God or “holy works.”²⁶ Many followed Augustine of Hippo in seeing everything in creation as a miracle because everything is ultimately dependent on divine providence. Moreover, the doctrine of bodily resurrection at the end of time underlined God's love for the matter he created. Incarnated in matter, Christ rose from the dead, taking matter to heaven; while still on earth he healed the bodies of others and resurrected them from the dead. It is therefore hardly surprising that the thirteenth-century theologian Bonaventure held all creation to be God's footprints; St. Francis of Assisi saw the Creator in stars, birds, and even wolves; the holy women Mechtild of Hackeborn and Margery Kempe con-

²⁶ For medieval definitions of miracle, see Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, distinction 10, chap. 1, ed. Joseph Strange, 2 vols. (Cologne: Heberle, 1851), vol. 2, 217; and Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia Dei*, question 6, article 2, *ra* 3, in *S. Thomae Aquinatis opera omnia*, ed. Roberto Busa, 7 vols. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1980), vol. 3, p. 232 col. 1.

templated God in a workaday donkey or a blade of grass.²⁷ Even those natural philosophers whose formulations point toward the rise of modern mechanics and astronomy never categorically denied the possibility of miracle. Nicholas Oresme, for example, who thought most visions resulted from indigestion, assented to the biblical story of the sun standing still for Joshua (Josh. 10:13).²⁸ All through the fifteenth century, polemicists for and against effluvial relics and *Dauerwunder* made reference to the resurrection of the body at the end of time. Those who opposed Christ's effluvial relics, such as Jan Hus, argued that he must have risen whole because we are promised integral and complete resurrection; those who supported such relics, such as Johannes Bremer, argued that they were left behind exactly to give us visual evidence of God's power for our future redemption.²⁹

Belief in divine omnipotence and in God's love for matter, manifested in his incarnation, was not the only assumption undergirding transformation miracles. Assumptions about matter itself were also at stake. And these were complicated. Following Isidore of Seville, the seventh-century encyclopedist whose etymological definitions were the starting point for much later speculation, medieval theologians held that "*materia* (the word for matter) comes from *mater* (the word for mother)." In medieval etymological thinking, etymology reflects ontology—that is, the structure of the word recapitulates the nature of the thing itself. *Mater* is in *materia*. Hence matter is the place of change and source of life. And as Isidore also said: "*Corpus* [body] is called from *corruptum*." So *corpus* contains *cor-ruptio*. Body is by definition that which changes. And to Isidore, body meant something closer to "thing" than to "living human being." Cadavers, grass, wood, and stone were all bodies.³⁰

²⁷ Bonaventure, *The Journey of the Mind to God*, trans. Philotheus Boehner, ed. Stephen F. Brown (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993); *The Book of Margery Kempe: The Text from the Unique MS. Owned by Colonel W. Butler-Bowdon*, ed. S. B. Meech and Hope Emily Allen, EETS 212 (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 69; Mechtilde of Hackeborn, *Sanctae Mechtildis virginis ordinis sancti Benedicti Liber specialis gratiae*, book 4, chap. 3, in *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac Mechtildianae*, ed. the monks of Solesmes, vol. 2 (Paris: Oudin, 1877), 260.

²⁸ Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre du ciel et du monde*, book 2, chap. 5, ed. Albert D. Menut and Alexander J. Denomy, trans. Albert D. Menut (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), book 1, chap. 7, 86; book 2, chap. 8, 363–73; book 2, chap. 25, 521–37.

²⁹ Jan Hus, "Questio de sanguine Christi," and "Tractatus," in *Opera omnia: Nach neuentdeckten Handschriften*, ed. Wenzel Flajšhans, vol. 1, fasc. 3 (Prague: Vilímek, 1903); Ludger Meier, "Der Erfurter Franziskanertheologe Johannes Bremer und der Streit um das Wilsnacker Wunderblut," in Albert Lang et al. (eds.), *Aus der Geisteswelt des Mittelalters (Festschrift Grabmann)*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters: Texte und Untersuchungen, Supplementband 3 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1935), 1262.

³⁰ Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), book 19, section 19.3–5, vol. 2 [pp. 321–22] and book 11, section 1.14–18, vol. 2 [p. 3].

Moreover, the model of material change, inherited by medieval thinkers from Aristotle, was the process of organic generation and corruption. Although theorists did sometimes distinguish living from nonliving or artificial from natural (i.e., they had the concepts that enabled them to do so), they usually spoke as if all change was what we would call “organic” birth and decay.

I take one example—that of alchemy—where the assumption is especially clear. When alchemical texts were first received in Latin Europe from Arabic sources in the twelfth century, theorists doubted whether the transformation of base metal into gold was possible. By the late thirteenth century they were beginning to accept the possibility and to theorize it. For example, when the theologian Giles of Rome was asked in an academic debate to consider the question whether human beings can make gold, the arguments he gave for the proposition included both the fact that human beings can make glass and the fact that Pharaoh’s magicians made serpents from staves (according to Exod. 7). Giles then went on to classify different forms of generation: horses from equine menstruum, bees from the decaying carcasses of cattle, wine from grapes, and gold from other metals deep in the earth. The difference, he said, was the place and form of generation. It is not so much the arguments for and against alchemy that interests me but rather the fact that what we would call normal physiological production (fetus from uterine material), what we would call spontaneous generation (bees from decaying flesh), and what we would call mechanical production (glass from sand or—if possible—gold from lead) are treated as parallel cases as far as the production of body is concerned and that production is conceptualized as generation. In other words, all matter is treated as organic and alive.³¹

There is a great deal more we could explore about the sense we find in Aristotle, Isidore, and Giles of Rome that matter is fertile, labile, percolating, and forever tossing up horses, bees, glass, or gold. I do not have time to do that here. What is worth pointing out, however, is that such an understanding of matter gave those medieval thinkers who wished to do so resources for controlling the miraculous, but it also contributed to a sense of matter as that which might constantly erupt in transformation.

³¹ Giles of Rome, *B. Aegidii Columnae Romani . . . Quodlibeta revisa, correctata, et varie illustrata*, studio M. F. Petri de Coninck (Louvain, 1646), 147–49, cited in William R. Newman, “Introduction: Alchemical Debate in the Thirteenth Century: The Defense of Art,” in William R. Newman (ed.), *The Summa Perfectionis of Pseudo-Geber: A Critical Edition, Translation and Study*, Collection de travaux de l’Académie Internationale d’Histoire des Science 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 32–34.

Building on the idea that matter was by definition changeable, some theologians developed the theory that God had planted patterns of change (called seminal reasons) in things at the moment of creation. The idea that bodies bore seeds of other bodies they might generate or become was used by a number of intellectuals to explain transformation miracles or elucidate doctrines such as transubstantiation. It was an idea that closely controlled the nature and direction of change, without naturalizing the miraculous completely. In the twelfth century, for example, several theologians gave the following explanation of the account of the wedding at Cana in John's gospel, where Christ allegedly turned water into wine. There are seminal reasons in things that unfold in preordained time. Trees draw up water into grapes and make wine. If God speeds this up and turns water into wine without the intervening steps, we call it a miracle.³² In the fourteenth century, a natural philosopher, Nicholas of Autrecourt used another theory of matter—atomism—to explain bodily resurrection, claiming that it was merely a miraculous version of the process whereby water could be vaporized into gas and return.³³ We find similar arguments in Nicole Oresme and Jan Hus, without the atomism. Such arguments used philosophical explanations of change to make transformation miracles extreme cases of natural events—cases whose mechanisms we can understand, although they can be carried out only by God.

But the same sense of matter as by definition that which generates and decays according to certain regular and known processes contributed to a sense of all bodies as a flow of generation and corruption. And understanding matter under the template of generation encouraged the expectation that blood, motion, or life might erupt from deep within it. Moreover, people in the late Middle Ages—ecclesiastical authorities, intellectuals, and the ordinary faithful—lived in a world where religious objects were not the only matter that was thought to undergo and to cause stunning change. Theologians and scientists were fascinated by the study of magnets, which drew iron particles across space, and alchemy, which, as we have seen, claimed to produce gold by speeding up growth that occurred deep in the earth. Everyone accepted spontaneous generation: the process by which decaying logs or bull carcasses gave birth to worms and mice. The stuff of the world was alive and dynamic, constantly coming to be and passing away. It is hardly surprising then that blood was thought to erupt on

³² Caroline W. Bynum, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 92; and Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism and Islam (1000–1150)*, trans. Graham Robert Edward (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 195.

³³ Nicholas of Autrecourt, *The Universal Treatise of Nicholas of Autrecourt*, trans. Leonard A. Kennedy et al. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1971), 101–102 and 141.

wafers and statues, that images moved their eyes and descended from walls, that the bodies of holy people broke out in the wounds of Christ.

Miracles of transformation presented practical and spiritual problems and opportunities to theologians, authorities (both secular and ecclesiastical), and ordinary believers who supported or opposed them. They raised fundamental questions about who controlled the sacred as well as about the nature of the divine and the nature of matter. They were certainly not, as is sometimes said, all frauds, and they were often accepted only after serious debate or not accepted at all. But their deployment and their questioning was not only a matter of power politics among ecclesiastics or between laity and clergy. The boy at Prato who saw our Lady step down from her wall like the Hussite at Neukirchen who attacked her, the alewife at Zehdenick who wanted to enhance her beer with the Eucharist like the theologian, and mystic Nicholas of Cusa who sought to keep Eucharistic presence unseen all shared a sense that the divine can and does appear in the material and that such manifestations can be salvific. Transformation miracles were occasions for the faithful to bypass clerical control and occasions for authorities to manipulate popular devotion; they provided opportunities for ordinary people as well as elites to carry out horrendous persecution of outsiders and Jews. But they were also occasions for serious scientific discussion of natural processes and deep theological consideration of the nature of the holy. And they were places where, in a religion often stereotyped as world- and body-denying, traces of divine glory were found in lowly matter and ordinary human experience. ■

Lecture

Witherspoon, Reid, and Scottish Philosophy in America

by Gordon Graham

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*I*n an article published in 1955, American historian Sydney Ahlstrom wrote: “The Scottish philosophy is no longer in good repute despite its proud reign in another day.” Indeed, few, if any, schools of philosophy have been given such disdainful treatment by historians as common sense realism; and few, if any, philosophers have had to suffer such ignominious re-evaluations as did Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart, who were once lionized as the founders of a great and enduring tradition.²

Fifty years later, the situation has changed once more, but only to a degree. In some quarters, the Scottish philosophy has again been credited with great significance for the intellectual history of America, whereas in others it remains almost entirely ignored. So, for example, Scott Philip Segrest’s 2010 study *America and the Political Philosophy of Common Sense* makes America’s inheritance from the Scottish philosophical tradition key to “the American mind,” at least in politics and ethics.³ On the other hand, the *Oxford Handbook of American Philosophy* makes only passing reference to Reid and Stewart and does not

¹ This paper was prepared for presentation at the Eighteenth Century Scottish Studies Society Conference, held in Princeton in June 2010 and organized under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Scottish Philosophy at Princeton Theological Seminary.

² Sydney E Ahlstrom, “The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology,” *Church History*, 24 (1955), 257.

³ Scott Philip Segrest, *America and the Political Philosophy of Common Sense*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2010).

mention a single one of the people Ahlstrom identifies as the most distinguished philosophical exponents of Scottish philosophy in nineteenth-century America.⁴

The purpose of Ahlstrom's essay was to throw some light on the question of how a philosophy so discredited in the twentieth century could have played such a hugely influential role in nineteenth. He found the answer in the relation of common sense philosophy to Protestant theology.

The secret of its success ... lay in its dualism, epistemological, ontological and cosmological ... [which] facilitated an all-out attack on both materialism and idealism ... [and] ... made possible a synchronous affirmation of science on the one hand, and an identification of the human intellect and the Divine Mind on the other ... Scottish philosophers could thus be monotonously consistent in their invocations of Bacon and Newton and at the same time certify those rational processes of man which lead toward natural theology and even contemplative piety and away from relativism and romantic excesses. The Scottish philosophy, in short, was a winning combination; and to American theologians ... it was an answer to a prayer.⁵

It is not hard to see how this sort of analysis would lead both to Segrest's enthusiasm and to the *Oxford Handbook's* indifference. For anyone who sees the American mind as crucially formed by its religious history, and is struck by the return of religion in recent American politics, the philosophical tradition, which was its original ally, will have special interest. For anyone who thinks that philosophy in America finally came into its own only when the connection with religion was severed, the historic connection with Scottish philosophy has little interest. This explains how it is that while Segrest devotes a whole chapter to Witherspoon, the index to the *Oxford Companion* does not list a single reference to him. It has twenty references to Wittgenstein, however, a philosopher to whom Segrest never alludes.

These are perhaps extremes. In between there is Kuklick's *History of Philosophy in America*.⁶ On Kuklick's more measured account, Scottish influence was evident in what he calls the "collegiate philosophy" of the nineteenth century. But this period was only a little longer than the middle years of the twentieth

⁴ Cheryl Misak, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of American Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁵ Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," 267–68.

⁶ Bruce Kuklick, *A History of Philosophy in America 1720-2000* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

century, when philosophy in the United States was being shaped by broader European trends. Accordingly, Witherspoon, Reid, and Stewart all warrant references, but only the same small number as Wittgenstein. So Ahlstrom's question suggests itself again. How are we to understand the enormous vacillation in Scottish philosophy's stock in America—not just over time, but contemporaneously? My purpose in this short paper is not to answer that large question, only to throw some light on a topic that must form part of it, namely, John Witherspoon's relation to Reid and the philosophy of common sense in America.

I

It would be futile, Ahlstrom says, to try to discover the first entrance of the Scottish philosophy into America; but since Reid's *Inquiry*—the *sine qua non*—was not published until 1764, the honor of being the first real ambassador should probably be assigned to John Witherspoon, who left his native land in 1768 to become president of the College of New Jersey.⁷

In a more recent study, David Hoeveler reaches much the same conclusion. “Witherspoon's instruction [at Princeton] begins the long ascendancy of the Scottish philosophy in the American academic curriculum.”⁸ In a somewhat similar vein, Jeffry Morrison holds that “by common consent Witherspoon was the principal carrier of the Scottish philosophy in early America.”⁹ But he raises a doubt about the connection with Reid by quoting Ashbel Green, one of Witherspoon's most devoted students and a later president of the College of New Jersey. Green had heard Witherspoon claim to have brought common sense arguments against Berkeley “before Reid and Beatty [sic], or any other author of their views, had published anything on the ideal system.”¹⁰ This claim relates to an essay that Witherspoon published in the *Scots Magazine* of 1753. The essay was a response to Lord Kames on freedom of the will and dates Witherspoon's allegiance to the Scottish philosophy to at least a decade before the appearance of Reid's *Inquiry*. If this is right, then the fact that Reid's *Inquiry* was published around the time of Witherspoon's move to Princeton is of no special significance, and in turn this raises a question about Ahlstrom's *sine qua non*. If Witherspoon arrived in New Jersey a proponent of the Scottish philosophy but

⁷ Ahlstrom, “The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology,” 261.

⁸ J. David Hoeveler, *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 123.

⁹ Jeffry H. Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 62.

¹⁰ Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic*, 63.

ignorant of Reid, then Reid's place in "the Scottish philosophy" can't be quite as indispensable as Ahlstrom implies.

In the light of these few facts, the argument could go one of two ways. We could take up the idea that Witherspoon was an early author of the Scottish school of common sense in his own right. This is not a very promising line of thought, however. As Mark Noll puts it, while "no one can question Witherspoon's effectiveness as a public figure or an agent of institutional renewal," on the intellectual level his achievement "turns out to be, both formally and materially, an illusion."¹¹ "Illusion" overstates the case, perhaps. It is a matter to which I will return. But even Witherspoon himself, who published quite extensively, did not think his lectures on moral philosophy to be worthy of publication, in part no doubt because they seem to be outlines on which he expanded in class. Their publication after his death, it is plausible to hold, was in the main an act of piety on the part of his admirers.

A second possibility is to reject Ahlstrom's *sine qua non* and thus divorce Scottish philosophy from the school of common sense. On this interpretation, if Witherspoon brought Scottish philosophy to America, it was not a version that involved the special appeal to common sense that subsequently came to be thought its leading characteristic. This is an initially more credible account of Witherspoon's role for at least two reasons. First, in his answer to Kames, published in the *Scots Magazine*, Witherspoon says, "The ideas we receive by our senses, and the persuasions we derive immediately from them, are exactly according to truth, to real truth, which certainly ought to be the same with philosophic truth."¹²

Here there is plainly subscription to an undoubted feature of Scottish philosophy—its commitment to the authority of empirical observation in preference to mere philosophical speculation. But this seems like empiricism without common sense. Witherspoon does not attribute a key role in reasoning to anything like Reid's first principles.

Second, while the published texts of the lectures that Witherspoon gave over many years at Princeton make frequent reference to Hutcheson, they make none to Reid. Segrest says that where they depart from Hutcheson, they do so in the spirit of Reid. This is not a claim that is easy to either refute or substantiate, but

¹¹ Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic 1768–1822* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 294.

¹² Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 25.

it has to be observed that the shape and content of Witherspoon's lectures follow Hutcheson's emphasis on moral and social philosophy far more closely than they do Reid's psychological focus in the *Inquiry*. Hutcheson is unquestionably a founding figure in Scottish Enlightenment philosophy. His moral philosophy was built around emulating the empirical methods of Newton and Bacon in natural philosophy, and Witherspoon clearly followed him in this. Here, certainly, we find some common ground with Reid, though Reid's source was not Hutcheson as much as George Turnbull, his teacher at Marischal College in Aberdeen. Turnbull appears to have developed a conception of philosophy very similar to that of Hutcheson, though more or less independently, and although Hutcheson uses the expression "common sense," it is in Turnbull rather than Hutcheson that we find the seeds of the idea as it came to be developed by Reid.

Against this interpretation there is this to be said: if the Scottish philosophy Witherspoon brought to America was basically Hutchesonian, then he was not the first to do so. In 1735, when Witherspoon was only twelve years of age, Francis Alison arrived in America, five years after graduating from the University of Edinburgh. Alison was an Irishman who may have studied under Hutcheson in Ireland and probably studied at Glasgow as well as Edinburgh. According to Douglas Sloan, it is "to him must go the major credit for introducing the thought of Francis Hutcheson to America."¹³ In 1755, Alison was instrumental in the creation of the College of Philadelphia (subsequently the University of Pennsylvania). He was aided in this by William Smith, a Scot who had studied at King's College Aberdeen. Together they put in place a curriculum that drew heavily on the Scottish university model and in which logic, metaphysics, and moral philosophy figured prominently. Importantly, when the presidency of the College of New Jersey fell vacant on the death of Samuel Finley in 1766, there was a proposal that Francis Alison be appointed in his stead. Had he been, we may assume that curricular changes there would have shown the influence of the Scottish philosophy no less obviously than they did under Witherspoon.

II

We should conclude from all this that it is not easy to endorse the view about Witherspoon and Scottish philosophy in America that Morrison says meets with "common consent." Indeed there seems good reason not to, and even if we could

¹³ Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971), 88.

save Witherspoon's reputation as the one who brought Scottish philosophy to America, it could be only by severing the connection with Reid and common sense. This seems too high a price to pay, because it is common sense realism rather than Hutchesonian moral sense theory that played such a major role in American philosophy in the nineteenth century. Should we therefore also conclude that Witherspoon's role in all this has been hugely exaggerated and that for the most part he can be dropped from the story? The answer, I think, is a qualified *no*.

Among Witherspoon's first students at the College of New Jersey was Samuel Stanhope Smith. Stanhope Smith was much more intellectually gifted than his teacher. After a short but distinguished spell at Hampden Sydney College in Virginia, he succeeded Witherspoon at Princeton, first as professor of moral philosophy and then as president, a position he held for over thirty years. It was he who turned to Reid and common sense. The lectures in philosophy that he gave as Witherspoon's successor, and which he prepared for publication, make repeated reference to Reid and reveal a detailed acquaintance with both sets of *Essays* as well as the *Inquiry*. Nevertheless, Smith turned to Reid precisely in order to realize more effectively the intellectual and educational vision that Witherspoon had brought to the college.

That vision had four elements. Students at Princeton were to be educated in science, true religion, personal virtue, and civic responsibility. In his opening lectures, Witherspoon lays out the connection between these elements:

Moral philosophy is that branch of Science which treats of the principles and laws of Duty or Morals. It is called Philosophy, because it is an inquiry into the nature and grounds of moral obligation by reason as distinct from revelation.

Noble and eminent improvements in natural philosophy, which have been made since the end of the last century, have been far from hurting the interest of religion, on the contrary, they have greatly promoted it. Why should it not be the same with moral philosophy, which is indeed nothing else but the knowledge of human nature?

Moral philosophy is divided into two great branches, Ethics and Politics ... Ethics relate to personal duties, Politics to constitution, government, and rights of societies ... [T]he principles of duty and obligation must be drawn from the nature of man ... [I]f we can discover how his Maker formed him, or for what he intended him, that certainly is what it ought to be.

The connection between truth and goodness, between the understanding and the heart, is a subject of great moment ... [T]ruth naturally and necessarily promotes goodness.¹⁴

This educational vision was articulated by Witherspoon in his inaugural address, “The Connection and Mutual Influences of Learning and Piety.” Stanhope Smith’s inaugural address has a strikingly similar title: “Whether It Be Profitable to Connect Piety with All the Other Arts Which Belong to a Liberal Education.” Ashbel Green, another of Witherspoon’s students and Smith’s successor as college president in 1812, repeats the same theme in his inaugural, “The Promotion of Science in Union with Piety.” Thus, we may safely say that Witherspoon established an educational vision for the College of New Jersey and so successfully bequeathed it to those who followed him that it remained in place for over half a century. Indeed, it found a second wind when, exactly one hundred years after Witherspoon, another philosophically educated Scot, James McCosh, was installed as president of the College of New Jersey. Like Witherspoon, McCosh was an “evangelical” who sought to combine the demands of Calvinist faith with the intellectual values of the Enlightenment.

Such an enduring influence provides powerful testimony of Witherspoon’s significance in the history of America and makes it sound odd for Noll to declare Witherspoon’s ultimate achievement to be “an illusion.” This judgment, however, reflects the thought that more than contingent circumstances, historical events, and contrasting personalities were at work. There appears to be an intellectual weakness in Witherspoon’s educational ideal, an intrinsic instability between the elements. Those elements that he believed to be mutually supporting are in fact mutually antagonistic.

It is not my purpose to explore the truth of this contention here, or to identify the elements that generate the greatest tension. I wish only to suggest that, given this educational ideal, Scottish philosophy was its natural ally. This is chiefly because philosophy in Scotland self-consciously had a dual role: the combination of science and pedagogy, or in modern parlance, the combination of research and teaching.

For a very long period of time, one feature of philosophy in Scotland marked it off from philosophy in other places. This was its almost exclusive location within the universities. Philosophy in its different branches was part of the

¹⁴ John Witherspoon, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, ed. Varnum Lansing Collins (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1912), Lectures I and II.

standard curriculum of the Scottish universities for 500 years. When, over the course of the eighteenth century, the old system of regents gradually gave way to a professoriate (first in Edinburgh and last in King's, Aberdeen), logic, moral philosophy, and natural philosophy were the titles of the principal chairs. This university base contrasts with the position elsewhere. Whereas Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau were philosophers in their personal capacity (so to speak), Scotland's best known figures—Carmichael, Hutcheson, Turnbull, Reid, Smith, Ferguson, Stewart, Brown, and others—all held university positions and made their living by teaching philosophy to successive generations of university students. The notable exception was Hume, of course, but even he was not a private man of letters by choice. He sought professional employment as a philosopher when he unsuccessfully applied for the chair of logic in Glasgow (in succession to Smith), then for the chair of moral philosophy in Edinburgh.

It is important to note that while these people were employed primarily to teach philosophy (often in part from fees paid directly by the student), the academic year was structured to facilitate their own studies as well. Furthermore, in the eighteenth century students entered the university at a much earlier age than subsequently. This meant that philosophy's educational role was accorded great significance and that practical ethics played a large part in the curriculum. "The mission of education in Hume's day," M. A. Stewart remarks, "was to train students for virtuous living in a society regulated by religious observance."¹⁵ A central part of the philosophers' activity was to contribute to this mission, but another part was to contribute to human understanding. And as the works of Hutcheson, Smith, Reid, and Ferguson and Stewart amply demonstrate, many of them did this at the highest levels.

It hardly needs to be remarked that this educational mission resonates powerfully with Witherspoon's vision for the College of New Jersey as well as Alison and Smith's for the College of Philadelphia. The Scottish Enlightenment and the American college ideal were deeply allied, as Douglas Sloan famously demonstrated in *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*. Stanhope Smith, arguably, was both the personal embodiment of this ideal and the one whose intellectual endeavors constitute the most sustained attempt to square the circle of piety and learning. Like Witherspoon, Stanhope Smith gave lectures on moral philosophy to the final-year students. His conception of the subject follows Witherspoon's closely:

¹⁵ Marina Frasca-Spada and P. Kail, ed. *Impressions of Hume* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 12.

In the philosophy of man the same rules ought to be observed which have been followed in natural philosophy ever since the age of the great Newton, with so much advantage to the science.

Moral philosophy ... is manifestly a science of primary dignity and importance, as it is intended to unfold the principles of human nature, and bring us more intimately acquainted with man ... [I]t proceeds to investigate the laws of morality and duty in the various relations of life, and to cultivate the heart to virtue, which gives the supreme value to this, and to every science. Man it contemplates in his different powers and principles of action ... as a member of a family ... as a subject of civil government, as a citizen of the world. It unfolds his infinitely important relations to the deity; and endeavors to open his view on those immortal hopes which give the chief, if not the only value to rational existence ... The dignity and happiness of individuals, the prosperity of states, and the order and happiness of the world are intimately connected with the practical knowledge of those truths at the cultivation and improvement of which this science aims.¹⁶

“The cultivation and improvement of truths intimately connected with personal happiness and civil order” can serve as a perfect summary of the nature and purpose of the Scottish philosophy.

Smith thus agrees with Witherspoon in essentials, but he differs in two important respects. First, he was much more actively engaged in the “improvement” of truth than Witherspoon, notably in his celebrated essay on physical variation among the human species. Second, his lectures drew extensively on Reid, and it was Reid’s conception of common sense that underlay the investigations in the essay. It is Smith, therefore, who brings Reid and the Scottish philosophy of common sense to prominence in America. Indeed, James McCosh, to whom the expression “the Scottish philosophy” is owed, held that it was due to the publication of Smith’s lectures in 1812 that “the Scottish became the most influential philosophy in America.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Samuel Stanhope Smith, *Lectures on Moral and Political Philosophy*, in two vol. (Trenton: Daniel Fenton, 1812), Lecture I.

¹⁷ James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1875), 188.

III

Preserving the connection with common sense is of some consequence for tracing the influence of Scottish philosophy at later points in the development of philosophy in America. C. S. Peirce, for instance, claimed one of his versions of pragmatism to be a revision of Reid and Stewart into what he called “critical common sensism.”¹⁸ But more interesting for my purposes is a rather different question. By Noll’s account, Stanhope Smith’s sustained attempt to give adequate articulation to a “Republican Christian Enlightenment” foundered because of an inherent tension between “piety” and “science.” If this is true, the general thought is hardly new and is unlikely to be contentious. It remains the case, of course, that there are colleges and universities in North America, some established recently, that expressly pursue the unity of piety and science, but for the most part, and across the world, institutions of higher education have abandoned any concern with religious instruction as being incompatible with academic objectivity. It is less certain whether the same institutions have also abandoned Witherspoon’s belief that the pursuit of truth naturally and necessarily promotes goodness, whether, that is to say, they have accepted a radical divorce between science and ethics. But to argue, as I have done, that the real connection between Witherspoon’s vision and Scottish philosophy lies in the unity of science and pedagogy, is to raise a more difficult issue—can academic research be divorced from university education?

At Harvard, Francis Bowen flew the flag for moral philosophy in the Scottish tradition until the tide of Darwinism swept it aside. Bowen held out for Witherspoon’s ideal—a “champion of the older ways” is David Hoeveler’s description of him.¹⁹ At the same time, his vision for Princeton was that the “college” should become a “university.” The difference, as he saw it, is the theme of the Fourth of July address he gave in Connecticut, but he continued to hold that “it should be the primary aim, both of a college and a university, to educate the promising youth of a country.”²⁰ To other minds, the concepts of “university” and “college” were radically different. In February 1876, however, an institution quite different in conception had opened its doors—the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Its stated goal was “the encouragement of research ... and the advancement of individual scholars, who by their excellence will advance the sciences they pursue, and the society where they dwell.” Its first president, Daniel Coit Gilman,

¹⁸ See Misak, *Oxford Handbook of American Philosophy*, 47.

¹⁹ J. David Hoeveler, *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 313.

²⁰ McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy*, 9.

expressly identifies it as a “university,” which he describes as “an institution quite different from a college, thus making an addition to American education, not introducing a rival.”²¹ In such a place, education in the Scottish philosophy, or anything like it, could have no role. It is impossible for a philosopher not to raise this question: what kind of philosophy could have a role in such an institution? But this opens up issues well beyond the scope of this paper. ■

²¹ Daniel Coit Gilman, in *American Higher Education: A Documentary History*, in two vols., R. Hofstadter and W. Smith, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 599.

Lecture

Bearing the Unbearable: Trauma, Gospel, and Pastoral Care

by Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger

Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger is Charlotte W. Newcombe Professor of Pastoral Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. She delivered this inaugural lecture on September 27, 2010, in Stuart Hall.¹

Traumatic loss lies at the very heart of the Christian imagination. The souls of those who call themselves Christian are indelibly stamped with the unbearable sorrow of this man, Jesus. After raising the hopes of many, Jesus died a shameful death, indeed an unjust and horrible death. What is more, his friends denied, betrayed, and abandoned him in his hour of need. He was tortured and executed as a common criminal, even though he had done nothing to warrant condemnation. Jesus Christ drank the cup of bitterness all the way to its dregs and descended into the very depths of hell. How can such a terrible story be borne? Much more than an intellectual puzzle about so-called “theories of atonement” is at stake here. Believers who have survived trauma stake their very lives on the power of the gospel to heal.

TRAUMA

How can we give trauma the kind of disciplined attention that it deserves? Holding even a fraction of this suffering steadily in our attention can be challenging. Is it possible to talk about trauma without causing pain to those already bearing trauma in their bodies and souls?² Daily, through the media, we are bombarded

¹ This lecture is dedicated to my beloved teacher Professor Ann Belford Ulanov, of Union Theological Seminary in New York. Studying with her was one of the great blessings of my life.

² Serene Jones asks a similar question: “How can ministers craft sermons that speak to the plight of trauma survivors without retraumatizing them?” See Serene Jones, *Trauma and Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 85.

with stories capable of breaking our hearts, yet little attention is given to the impact of such accounts on its hearers. How can we bear these stories with an open heart?³ Indeed, how do we bear them at all?

Pastoral theology, as I understand it, is first and foremost a theology of *God's care* for the world in Jesus Christ, in which we are invited to participate.⁴ This means that all pastoral care depends upon prayer, leads to worship, and trusts in the promises of God. Such an orientation leads us to confess that though we ourselves, with our enduring failures to love, cannot truly redeem traumatic loss, we cling in hope to the One who can and does. That One drank the cup of bitterness, died a death of anguish, and descends into every darkness that threatens to overwhelm us.

Those who study theology are called to ponder holocausts of every kind, from biblical “texts of terror,”⁵ to grueling historical or theological tracts, to the horrors of the evening news. How can we fortify ourselves, our students, or our children for the kind of world we live in? Whether painted on a vast canvas of national or international significance or in a miniature of a single family or community, traumatic loss is ubiquitous. When it hits us personally, it changes our lives irrevocably: through the shock of an accident, a criminal assault, or tragic death; or through the multiple and complex traumas that arise in relation to immigration, war, imprisonment, torture, domestic violence, or sexual abuse. Unacknowledged and unhealed, trauma often leads to further violence, against either oneself or others, and thus to more trauma. With knowledgeable intervention and wise support, however, trauma can be healed and may even become “a catalyst for growth and transformation,” the turning point of a life, a sign and symbol of God’s goodness and care.⁶

As caregivers in the church who seek to help others, how can we be sure that we will first, do no harm? How can we be a source of spiritual strength and practical support for the communities we serve? Moreover, as witnesses to the trauma of others or as persons afflicted by trauma ourselves, where do we turn for help? In this inaugural lecture, I want to set forth an understanding of the impact of

³ See Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, “Keeping An Open Heart in Troubled Times: Self-empathy as a Christian Spiritual Practice,” in *A Spiritual Life: Perspectives from Poets, Prophets, and Preachers*, ed. Allan Hugh Cole Jr. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011).

⁴ See Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004).

⁵ Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984).

⁶ Patricia Mathes Cane, *Trauma Healing and Transformation* (Watsonville: Capacitar, 2000), 17.

trauma and inquire into the role of the gospel and the church in its healing. I plan to address three basic issues:

- What is trauma, and how does it affect us?
- How do we break free from the vicious cycle of trauma's impact?
- How does the gospel with the pastoral care of the church bring healing to the traumatized?

What Is Trauma, and How Does It Affect Us?

The twentieth century offered countless opportunities for studying trauma, but it was not until the 1970s that social and political ferment enabled its study to advance decisively.⁷ By the mid 1970s, hundreds of “rap” groups had been organized by Vietnam Veterans against the War, gatherings where men could speak honestly about the horror of war. At the same time, women gained collective courage as they shared, among other things, their stories of rape, sexual abuse, or domestic violence. No longer willing to allow “denial, secrecy, and shame”⁸ to render them mute, both men and women were able to transform what had previously been private suffering into powerful public action for social and political change. In the 1970s and 1980s, crisis centers, rape hotlines, and safe shelters were established with painstaking effort in state after state.⁹

At the same time, the Veterans Administration commissioned thorough studies of the war's impact on returning Vietnam vets.¹⁰ Subsequently, a “five-volume study on the legacies of Vietnam ... demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt [the] direct relationship [of trauma] to combat exposure.”¹¹ With multiple vectors for social change converging, the American Psychiatric Association included a new diagnosis in their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for 1980 called Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In their first attempt to capture its essence,

⁷ For a fascinating account of the history of the study of psychological trauma, see Judith Herman's classic text, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), chap. one.

⁸ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 29.

⁹ Herstory of Domestic Violence: A Timeline of the Battered Women's Movement, MINCAVA Electronic Clearinghouse, accessed September 20, 2010, <http://www.mincava.umn.edu/documents/herstory/herstory.html>. “A study in Chicago reveals that from September 1965 to March 1966, 46.1% of the major crimes perpetrated against women took place in the home. It also found that police response to domestic disturbance calls exceeded total response for murder, rape, aggravated assault, and other service crimes.” The preceding statistic cites Del Martin, *Battered Wives* (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), 4, as does the following statistic: “From 1968 to 1973, the crime of rape increased 62% nationwide.” With a statistic like this, one wonders whether the crime actually increased so dramatically or whether the increase can be accounted for by the fact that more and more women were willing to acknowledge and report it.

¹⁰ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

psychiatrists described traumatic events as lying “outside the range of usual human experience,”¹² a definition that proved untenable, given that traumatic incidents of one kind or another are quite common.¹³ As psychiatrist Judith Herman writes: “Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.”¹⁴ In fact, a simple, thumbnail definition of trauma might be: “an inescapably stressful event that overwhelms people’s coping mechanisms.”¹⁵ When people face “intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and the threat of annihilation,”¹⁶ and when these feelings persist for more than a month, PTSD becomes the chosen diagnosis.¹⁷ It is important to note, however, that witnesses to horrific events are also vulnerable to trauma. Watching helplessly as a loved one dies, seeing the Twin Towers fall to the earth, or listening in fear as one’s mother or sibling gets beaten—such events can also trigger a traumatic reaction.¹⁸

The subjective experience of feeling overwhelmed uniquely characterizes trauma and differentiates it from those situations that are experienced, perhaps, as exceptionally stressful but not as traumatic. Peter Levine elaborates: “Traumatized people ... are unable to overcome the anxiety of their experience. They remain overwhelmed by the event, defeated and terrified. Virtually imprisoned by their fear, they are unable to re-engage in life. Others who experience similar

¹² Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 33.

¹³ “Norris (1992), in a study of 1,000 adults in the southern United States, found that 69% of the sample had experienced a traumatic stressor in their lives, and that this included 21% in the past year alone.” Quoted in Bessel A. van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth, eds., *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society* (New York: Guilford Press, 2006), 135.

¹⁴ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 33.

¹⁵ van der Kolk et al., *Traumatic Stress*, 279.

¹⁶ N. C. Andreasen, “Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” in *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, 4th ed., H. I. Kaplan and B.J. Sadock, eds. (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1985), 918–24, quoted in Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 33.

¹⁷ Distinguishing the criteria for diagnoses can be dizzying because PTSD has so many close cousins, such as acute stress disorder, panic disorder, anxiety disorder, agoraphobia, etc. Following is a synopsis of the seven criteria of PTSD: 1) the traumatic stressor involves death, injury, or serious threat (or witnessing or learning about such to another); 2) the response involves intense fear, helplessness, or horror; 3) the person persistently re-experiences the traumatic event; 4) the person persistently avoids stimuli associated with the trauma and tries to numb general responsiveness; 5) symptoms of hyperarousal persist; 6) the full-symptom picture must be present for a month or more; 7) and the symptoms cause “clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.” See also “309.81 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,” Psychology Online, <http://www.psychiatryonline.com/content.aspx?aID=3357&searchStr=post-traumatic+stress+disorder>.

¹⁸ See Kaethe Weingarten, *Common Shock: Witnessing Violence Every Day* (New York: New American Library, 2003). See also Kaethe Weingarten, “Witnessing the Effects of Political Violence in Families: Mechanisms of Intergenerational Transmission and Clinical Interventions,” *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 30, no. 1 (January 2004): 45–59.

events may have no enduring symptoms at all ... No matter how frightening an event may seem, not everyone who experiences it will be traumatized.”¹⁹

The imponderable factor here is that the nature of the triggering event in and of itself does not guarantee a traumatic reaction. One person may experience the event as traumatic while her neighbor, friend, or daughter, having the exact same experience, may find it stressful but not traumatic. This fact remains completely inexplicable until we realize that none of us ever actually has the exact same experience because our minds organize our experiences in a completely idiosyncratic way. Its meaning will be different for each person because our way of making narrative sense of our lives is utterly unique. Thus, feeling overwhelmed or immobilized is a variable that cannot be predicted by either the nature, the magnitude, or the intensity of the triggering event.²⁰ “Consequently,” writes Carolyn Yoder, “a traumatic reaction needs to be treated as valid, regardless of how the event that induced it appears to anyone else.”²¹

I want to underscore this point because I believe it is fundamental to competent pastoral care. Time and again, one hears people minimizing or discounting the anguish of others, essentially encouraging them to “get over it.” Wanting those they love to be whole, they try to encourage them by *rationaly explaining* why they should not be upset by so small a thing. Yet there is little that so completely obstructs the healing process as having someone offer the free advice to “get over it” or “put it behind” them. While such defense mechanisms—denial and minimization—on the part of friends or caregivers are understandable as human reactions to pain in those they love, they only injure the traumatized further, perhaps to the point of shaming them into silence and truly unbearable isolation.

Yet, why *aren't* they able simply to “get over it?” The various symptoms of post-traumatic stress have been aptly summarized by Judith Herman, as hyperarousal, intrusion, and constriction: “*Hyperarousal* reflects the persistent expectation of danger; *intrusion* reflects the indelible imprint of the traumatic moment; *constriction* reflects the numbing response of surrender.”²² While each symptom originates in the triggering event itself, they all have an afterlife in the person’s unfolding post trauma history.

¹⁹ Peter Levine, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1997), 28.

²⁰ Carolyn Yoder, *The Little Book of Trauma Healing* (Intercourse: Good Books, 2005), 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11 (emphasis in the original).

²² Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 35.

Any kind of physical or emotional shock has the potential to set certain physiological responses in motion. Typical responses include one's heart beating faster, difficulty in breathing, rising blood pressure, and the constriction of one's stomach. One's thoughts may begin to race and the skin may become cold. These responses all stem from the autonomic nervous system's putting the body on high alert in response to a perception of threat. The release of hormones mobilizes the body for fight or flight. When neither fight nor flight seems possible, the physiological response of the body is to freeze.²³

In the freeze response, "the victim of trauma enters an altered reality. Time slows down and there is no fear or pain. In this state, if harm or death occurs, the pain is not felt as intensely."²⁴ There is a notable shift in consciousness, in which there is a subjective sense of detachment. Victims of sexual assault, for instance, sometimes speak of "leaving their body" and watching themselves from another point in the room: standing next to the bed or looking down from the ceiling.²⁵ Metaphorically, it is as if the soul escapes the body to protect the person from the physical pain and the full emotional impact of his or her radical vulnerability.

Like the fight-or-flight response, freezing is also heralded by a flood of hormones. In 1844, Dr. David Livingstone described his subjective experience of being seized by a lion: "Growling horribly close to my ear, he shook me as a terrier dog does a rat. It produced a sort of dreaminess in which there was no sense of pain, nor feeling of terror, though I was quite conscious of all that was happening ... This placidity is probably produced in all animals killed by the carnivore; and if so, is a merciful provision of the Creator for lessening the pain of death."²⁶

The capacity of the mind to dissociate like this may reduce the immediate pain and horror of the event, but it does so at a high cost. Studies now demonstrate that "people who enter a dissociative state at the time of the traumatic event are among those most likely to develop long-lasting PTSD."²⁷

During a traumatic ordeal, the intense hyperarousal of the emotions often "interfere[s] with proper information processing and the storage of information

²³ Babette Rothschild, *The Body Remembers* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), 8.

²⁴ Rothschild, *The Body Remembers*, 10.

²⁵ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 43.

²⁶ The following link, accessed May 10, 2010, was not accessible at publication: <http://www.man-eater.info/gpage5.html>.

²⁷ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 239.

in narrative (explicit) memory.”²⁸ This means that memory of the trauma is often fragmented; it is not organized in a linear, narrative fashion, as normal memories are. Instead, certain features associated with sensory data are vividly remembered, such as a particular smell, sound, image, or color. If a dog was barking when the person was assaulted, for instance, the sound of a barking dog might evoke subsequent feelings of terror or rage strangely unaccompanied by an explicit memory of the assault. Or, alternatively, the memory of the assault may be explicit yet strangely dissociated from the accompanying emotions. Van der Kolk comments: “Although the individual may be unable to produce a coherent narrative of the incident, there may be no interference with implicit memory; the person may “know” the emotional valence of a stimulus and be aware of associated perceptions, without being able to articulate the reasons for feeling or behaving in a particular way. Pierre Janet (1859–1947) proposed that traumatic memories are split off (dissociated) from consciousness and instead are stored as sensory perceptions, obsessional ruminations, or behavioral reenactments.”²⁹

Such intrusive memories can be quite distressing, as aspects of the traumatic event are replayed in the mind over and over again, without the full picture, without the experience of “normal memory” that enables a coherent sense of self-understanding.

After such an event, the hyperarousal of the nervous system keeps persons on a kind of “permanent alert,”³⁰ where they may startle easily and sleep poorly. Subject to nightmares and intrusive flashbacks, they may begin to circumscribe their world to avoid anything that might retrigger the feelings of helplessness, rage, fear, grief, panic, and shame associated with the event. Flashbacks are something like having nightmares while awake. Something triggers the memory of the trauma, perhaps the smell of alcohol, the sound of a particular footfall, a certain tone of voice or characteristic gesture. Indeed, anything can trigger a flashback because of the way the brain organizes data in a vast web of interconnected associations. Neurologists remind us that neurons that “fire together, wire together.”³¹ Two or more things are forever associated, “wired together,” in the brain’s neural pathways. Suddenly, one is shaking and sweating in response to an ordinary event.³² Yet knowing that one’s response is out of proportion to what

²⁸ Van der Kolk, *Traumatic Stress*, 286.

²⁹ Van der Kolk, *Traumatic Stress*, 287.

³⁰ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 35.

³¹ See Daniel Siegel, *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are* (New York: The Guilford Press), chap. four.

³² “Painful life experiences get encoded in our brains and bodies and can be reactivated with great intensity by the right kind of trigger decades later, even if we believe that we have

triggered it only increases a sense of powerlessness, anxiety and shame. Because such experiences of intrusion are so frightening and because survivors can make little rational sense of them, survivors often do whatever they can to avoid these states or to deaden the pain by numbing out in some way.

If survivors do not actively seek help, a whole range of defensive patterns may develop. Rather than facing the pain directly, survivors may turn the intense traumatic energy against themselves. Many addictive behaviors have their source in unresolved trauma that is not consciously faced: substance abuse, workaholism, eating disorders, even rituals of self-mutilation can seem preferable to experiencing the buried pain of trauma.³³ Shame, dread, and helplessness are pervasive, alternating with numbness, depression, or a sense of emptiness. The victims' sense of agency is damaged; they often feel powerless and alone in a hostile world, wondering whether anyone cares if they live or die.³⁴ Spiritual questions may become particularly intense, with a growing sense of disorientation or even meaninglessness. Living in an unsafe world, survivors of trauma put themselves on constant alert, watching for danger.

Whereas many victims suffer in silence, others turn the intensity of their suffering outward. Feelings of rage may predominate. Wanting justice, fantasies of revenge may become an obsession. Sometimes victims create a narrative in which the plotline of good versus evil has them perpetually in role of the "good guy" with "the other" as the "bad guy." The enemy is typically seen as less than fully human. The traumatized begin to tell a predictable tale that seldom varies. Pastoral theologian David Augsburger challenges victims of trauma to ask themselves a number of pointed questions: Can I identify what I get out of rehearsing an offense over and over? Why do I insist on replaying the history of injury? How often have I told and retold the story of the offense to others to gain their support and validation of my role or position as victim?³⁵

When such desires for revenge are not consciously wrestled with, attacks on others may seem justified as a way of restoring a sense of dignity, respect, and

dealt with them or have completely forgotten about them." A. J. van den Blink, "Trauma and Spirituality," 16. The following link, accessed July 30, 2008, was not available at publication: <http://www.easternaapc.org/articlesofinterest.html>, accessed July 30, 2008.

³³ Yoder, *The Little Book of Trauma Healing*, 33.

³⁴ Feeling helpless and alone in a potentially hostile world was Karen Horney's definition of neurosis. See *Neurosis and Human Growth* (New York: Norton, 1950). Serene Jones speaks repeatedly throughout her book on the damaged sense of agency of the traumatized and their need for experiences of empowerment; see Jones, *Trauma and Grace*.

³⁵ David Augsburger, *Hate Work* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 227.

honor or in the name of justice.³⁶ In a chilling comment, James Gilligan, director of the Center for the Study of Violence at the Harvard Medical School, comments that “All violence is an effort to do justice or to undo injustice.”³⁷ Pain that is not transformed does not simply disappear. As Ann Ulanov writes: “Where we repress our grudge-holding, our wish to make someone pay for what has happened to us ... that repressed shadow does not just go away. It goes unconscious and remains alive with instinctual impulses, emotions, but far out of reach of modification by social or personal reality testing ... We put onto others what we do not own in ourselves and identify them with this rejected bit of ourselves. The personal becomes social. But then this live bit of shadow menaces us from the outside.”³⁸

Instead of the trauma being “acted in” against the self, it is now “acted out” against others. The traumatized feel justified in venting their rage, yet such repeated venting only serves to inscribe the anger and sense of moral outrage more deeply in body and soul. It does nothing to bring healing or peace.

Freud describes “repetition compulsion” as a symbolic reliving of the trauma, as a way the traumatized express their suffering while yet failing to become fully conscious of it. Children who have been sexually abused, for example, may engage in ritual play that gives unconscious voice to the abuse. Those honored for bravery in war may suffer repetitive nightmares³⁹ or else wreak terrible violence on their families as they struggle with mental pain.⁴⁰ The combination of survivor guilt, depression, frozen grief, anguish, and rage act as a kind of seething cauldron beneath the surface, ready to burst forth in a symbolic re-enactment of the original horror, often with tragic results.

How Do We Break Free from the Vicious Cycle of Trauma's Impact?

Is it possible to forge a path that seeks neither “oblivion” on the one hand nor “revenge” on the other?⁴¹ Is it possible truly to heal? Ann Ulanov describes the predicament of those who have constricted their lives in the aftermath of trauma.

³⁶ Howard Zehr, “Doing Justice, Healing Trauma: The Role of Restorative Justice in Peacebuilding,” *South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 1, no. 1 (Spring, 2008), 15.

³⁷ James Gilligan, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic* (New York: Random House, 1996), quoted in Howard Zehr, “Doing Justice, Healing Trauma: The Role of Restorative Justice in Peacebuilding,” *South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 1, no. 1, (Spring, 2008), 5.

³⁸ Ann Belford Ulanov, *The Unshuttered Heart* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 140–41.

³⁹ Wilmer, Harry, “The Healing Nightmare: A Study of the War Dreams of Vietnam Combat Veterans,” *Quadrant* 19, no. 1 (Spring, 1986).

⁴⁰ See the story told by “Gizelle” in which the unhealed suffering of war leads to sexual assault with tragic effects in Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal* (New York: Harper, 2008).

⁴¹ Bessel van der Kolk dedicates his remarkable anthology, *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body and Society*, “to Nelson Mandela and all those who,

We swap aliveness for restriction in order to feel safer, avoid pain, survive some blow that seems to us unbearable, that would destroy us. We fear we are empty inside so we cover it up with manufactured control, or made-up excitement, or self-promotion. The emptiness can never change if we refuse to experience it, and in the company of an other. We need an other to depend on when we turn to face our deadness. Whatever we are afraid of, it requires our attention; we must go down into it, look around, not knowing if and how we will come out.⁴²

Three key phrases need to be underlined here: First, whatever we are afraid of *requires our attention*. Second, we need to experience it *in the company of an other*. And third, we take these steps *not knowing if and how we will come out*.

Those who seek to reclaim their lives after trauma need to face what has actually happened to them. *It requires their attention*. If their nervous system is in a hyperaroused state, they need to find as much safety as possible. Only true safety will provide the emotional security needed to begin the healing process commonly known as mourning. Giving voice to all that they have experienced—the terror and helplessness, the sense of moral outrage and personal violation, the sorrow, hurt, anger and grief—becomes the essential first step in piecing together a coherent narrative.

Yet none of this can happen apart from the lively presence of *a caring other*. Who is there that can bear the anguish of such a narrative, without minimizing or denying it, without giving advice or offering strategies to overcome it? Who can listen without offering empty platitudes or switching the focus to a similar story of their own? Who has the wisdom to refrain from asking intrusive questions prompted by their own anxiety, allowing the traumatized space to tell their story in their own way at their own pace? Who can offer a compassionate, caring presence, free of pity or judgment, of praise or blame?⁴³

Healing begins as the traumatized begin to piece together a coherent narrative, creating a web of meaning around unspeakable events while remaining fully connected emotionally both to themselves and to their listener. It takes courage even to begin such a conversation. Their feelings can be confusing and difficult

after having been hurt, work on transforming the trauma of others, rather than seeking oblivion or revenge.”

⁴² Ulanov, *The Unshuttered Heart*, 38.

⁴³ Training in nonviolent or compassionate communication teaches an exquisite awareness and concrete strategies for the kind of empathic attunement described here. See Marshall Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (Encinitas: Puddledancer Press, 2003).

to sort out. Often there seem to be no words that adequately describe the horror. Moreover, is it safe to trust the listener? Feelings of shame, fear of judgment, and extreme vulnerability are common. Maybe talking about it will make matters worse.

Talking about it can, in actual fact, make matters worse. Any kind of direct processing of the traumatic experience needs to be balanced at all times with a sense of safety and containment. Anchoring oneself in the present, feeling safe with one's listener, processing one small piece at a time, and mourning each of the profound losses involved, all these steps take time, patience and exquisite self-care. Trauma specialists are trained to pay attention to signs of distress and deliberately slow down the process, remembering the maxim that "the slower you go, the faster you get there."⁴⁴ The goal in talking about it is to stay fully connected to the feelings without becoming overwhelmed. Eye contact with the caregiver, slowing down the pace, taking a break from the past, returning to the present with clear focus on one's bodily sensations, all help to put on the brakes.⁴⁵ Understanding what is happening and why profoundly assists the healing process as well. This is why a clear conceptual understanding of trauma is important: understanding becomes a part of the holding environment that contains anxiety and increases a sense of empowerment.

Those who have courageously faced trauma give powerful witness to the risks involved. Will they choose life by facing the pain, or will they shrink back once again into numbing defenses?

When I get into a crisis now, instead of saying, "Oh my God, I'm never going to heal," I see that it's like layers, and the more I work with it, the more they keep coming around. And even though it's like, "But I was feeling good two days ago and now I'm shaking and crying and I can't sleep," I'm beginning to see that I'm not coming back to the same place. I'm coming back at a different level ... When I reach the next level where the tears are, where the fear is, where the tiredness is, I have to trust. ..."⁴⁶

⁴⁴Jon G. Allen, *Coping with Trauma: Hope Through Understanding* (Washington, D.C: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2005), 251–53.

⁴⁵Babette Rothschild writes: "I never help clients call forth traumatic memories unless I and my clients are confident that the flow of their anxiety, emotion, memories, and body sensations can be contained at will. I never teach a client to hit the accelerator, in other words, before I know that he can find the brake." See "Applying the Brakes," *Body Mind Spirit*, accessed July 10, 2010, http://www.saskworld.com/bodymindspirit/edition21/17_article_rothschild.htm.

⁴⁶Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 457.

For me the decision not to identify with the past was a decision, not just a change I went through in the healing process. I had to make a quantum leap that I was no longer going to have the abuse be the cause and my life be the effect ... Right now you have to choose what standpoint you are going to live life from. And it's a constant choice.⁴⁷

Trauma survivors need to choose life over death, not once but many times, reaching out with the fragile hope that the trauma can be healed or transformed, that the pain will abate, or that some kind of normalcy will return. Some try to take their lives. Tragically, many succeed, despairing that nothing can stop the eternal recurrence of the trauma. Each person needs the love, support, respect, and understanding of caring others.⁴⁸ Those who grow through and beyond trauma do so in part by forging a spiritual framework for what is called post-traumatic growth. Not knowing if or how they will come out, they nevertheless are freed to take steps toward greater and greater freedom. It is to one such framework that I now turn.

How Does the Gospel with the Pastoral Care of the Church Bring Healing to Those Suffering from Traumatic Loss?

When we enter “the strange new world of the Bible,” we are confronted with paradox and mystery at every turn. Here we behold a crucified Savior, a God who bears our grief and carries our sorrow, who heals by taking away the sin of the world, both the evil we suffer and the evil we do. It makes no rational sense. Looked at from outside the circle of faith, it is a complete conundrum. “Getting in” on this religion wrenches your mind inside out: Is the Cross of Christ sheer foolishness, or is it the very power of God? (I Cor. 1:18).

At its core, the Cross becomes gospel for the traumatized only if they are able to see there a divine love willing to bear what is unbearable for mortal, fallen human beings. God bears for us the full weight of both sin and death. If God in Jesus Christ descends into the worst hell imaginable in order to deliver us from the hells we inflict upon one another, then such a God is worthy of our trust. When we stand by helplessly witnessing the suffering and dying of those we love, we have a God to whom we can entrust them in life and in death. For Jesus Christ is not simply a human companion who comforts us by suffering trauma

⁴⁷ Ibid., 438.

⁴⁸ Sometimes teens and children are overlooked. Where early attachment is threatened or ruptured, children are much more vulnerable to trauma throughout their lives. See the valuable work done by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network for helpful resources: <http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn/>. (I am indebted to Jennie Olbrych for this reference.)

alongside us. As the creeds of the church attest, he is known to us as the risen Lord, the very Wisdom and Power of God, through whom God will fulfill his purpose of redemption. Jesus Christ, the gospel attests, bears what cannot be borne by fragile, fallen human beings. He alone bears the sin of the world and he alone bears it away.

As the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, Christ is known as that One who suffers for our sakes as well. On our behalf and for our sakes, he takes human depravity into his own divine heart in order to transform it, so that it no longer has the power to separate us from God. The powers of sin and death that have such a hold on us—and that are at the root of all trauma—are finally nullified. Not only the fear of death, by which human beings are made “subject to lifelong bondage” (Heb. 2:15), but also the fear of eternal estrangement from the very Source of Life is proclaimed to be overcome in Christ. Through Christ, we have access to all that we long for: the loving gaze of one who cherishes us, miraculous outpourings of grace, a steady anchor in times of distress, mercy on our weakness, forgiveness of our sins, and most basic of all, the lifeline of basic trust.

If salvation means forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life, then all of our pastoral arts of healing have this promise as its *telos*. Healing, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, is always set within this larger context of the unimaginable reaches of God’s salvation.⁴⁹ Our hope is nothing less than the salvation of the world in Jesus Christ; it is also a hope held out for the perpetrators of trauma as well as for its victims. All those human beings from whom we normally seek to separate ourselves by every conceivable means, those perpetrators of unspeakable horror—they, too, perhaps more than anyone—need to hear the gospel word of God’s judgment and mercy. If One died for all, then he died for those who have brought the terrors of hell, not only upon others, but also upon themselves through their own actions.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ See Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology and Pastoral Counseling: A New Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). See also Robert W. Jenson, “Story and Promise in Pastoral Care,” *Pastoral Psychology* 26, no. 7 (1977): 113–23. “In historical fact and by manifest anthropological necessity, nothing but final hope ever sustains genuine suffering or enables creative historic action.”

⁵⁰ “More recently has come an awareness of ‘perpetrator-induced trauma’ and its role in perpetuating the cycle of victimization and offending; severe offending can itself cause trauma in offenders.” Howard Zehr, “Doing Justice, Healing Trauma: The Role of Restorative Justice in Peacebuilding,” *South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 1, no. 1 (Spring, 2008): 10. See also Robert MacNair, *Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress: The Psychological Consequences of Killing* (Westport: Praeger, 2002). For a compelling story, see Wendell Berry, “Pray without Ceasing” in *Fidelity* (New York: Pantheon, 1992), 3–60.

Indeed, whenever we affirm that Christ died for sinners, we affirm our solidarity with all who do harm, solidarity in sin as well as in our deliverance from sin. In confessing ourselves as sinners, utterly unable to save ourselves, we recognize that under similar circumstances of deprivation, terror, or colossal historic evils, we, too, would be capable of monstrous crimes toward our fellow human beings. The Cross of Jesus Christ is God's response not only to the terror of human trauma but also to the anguish of human guilt, bringing succor and healing to the one, and judgment, forgiveness and the "godly grief" of repentance to the other (II Cor. 7:10). When we affirm the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, we affirm his power to bring every kind of evil to an end. "Though innocent, Christ suffers as if guilty and ends the logic of evil by taking our suffering onto his body, and not being destroyed by it nor by the death it inflicts. The abyss of love is revealed as stronger than the abyss of death, the power of love as stronger than the power of hate."⁵¹

This is an interpretive framework that no psychiatrist or therapist has to offer, no twelve-step program or self-help group can claim, but that can be preached and taught week after week in the context of ordinary pastoral care: that in overcoming the world, Jesus Christ saves us from both the guilt and anguish of human sin, as well as the terror and trauma of suffering and death.

These are words of hope to which the traumatized may cling. "Now hope that is seen is not hope" (Rom. 8:24). Though our faith holds us fast to this hope, we know that many descend into their graves with nothing but hatred toward those who have harmed them or those they love. Forgiveness, though freely given by God, does not seem to be a human possibility for us in turn. Try as we might, it does not seem subject to our human will but comes, when it does, as a miracle of God.⁵² While not subject to our human will, forgiveness rarely happens apart from an active decision to forgive. One definition of forgiveness, given by pastoral theologian David Augsburger, "is an act of laying aside one's rational arguments for repayment, my principled arguments for my being truly in the right and you being wholly in the wrong, and at last offering a full and complete pardon to the other, whether or not there are any believable signs of authentic remorse or repentance in the perpetrator. In granting the other person release, one receives one's own."⁵³

⁵¹ Ulanov, *The Unshuttered Heart*, 150–51.

⁵² Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, "Forgiving Abusive Parents," in *Forgiveness and Truth*, ed. Alistair McFadyen and Marcel Sarot (New York: T & T Clark, 2001), 71–98.

⁵³ David Augsburger, *Hate-Work: Working Through the Pain and Pleasures of Hate* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 232.

We have seen this miracle of forgiveness in the testimonies of those who appeared before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. One that has stayed with me is the testimony of Ms. Babalwa Mhlauli. Bishop Tutu writes, “When she had finished telling her story, she said she wanted to know who had killed her father. She spoke quietly and, for someone so young, with much maturity and dignity. You could have heard a pin drop in that hushed City Hall when she said, “We do want to forgive but we don’t know whom to forgive.”⁵⁴ We see it in Marietta Jaeger-Lane who has worked tirelessly for both victims and perpetrators in the years that followed the kidnapping and murder of her seven-year-old daughter, Susie. Founder of Murdered Victim’s Families for Reconciliation, Ms. Jaeger-Lane continues to honor her daughter by offering testimony to end capital punishment for capital crimes.⁵⁵ Such stories challenge us to consider those for whom we harbor ill will, those we are unable or unwilling to forgive. Sometimes, we can only lay them at the foot of the Cross for God to judge, confessing our inability to fathom either the extent of the evil or its redemption. We can only point away from ourselves to the transcendent hope of the gospel we are called to proclaim.

If maintaining hope is the foundation of all healing, as psychotherapist Jon G. Allen attests, then the gospel has something fundamental to offer those afflicted by trauma.⁵⁶ While ministry cannot replace the work of psychiatry or psychotherapy, it can nevertheless function as an indispensable part of the healing process.⁵⁷ When human trust has eluded them, the traumatized desperately need an anchor, a point of reference, something or someone reliable in whom to place their trust. Scripture attests again and again that by the power of the Spirit, God comes to those who cry out for help: “I called on Your name, O Lord, from the lowest pit. You have heard my voice: “Do not hide Your ear from my sighing, from my cry for help. You drew near on the day I called on You, and said, ‘Do not fear!’” (Lam. 3: 55-57: NKJV).

⁵⁴ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 149.

⁵⁵ Testimony of Marietta Jaeger Lane on Behalf of Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights & Journey of Hope, An Act Abolishing the Death Penalty and Replacing it with Life Imprisonment without Possibility of Release, Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing, February 7, 2007, www.mtabolitionco.org/news/Lane%20Testimony.pdf, accessed September 9, 2010. See also: Marietta Jaeger, *The Lost Child* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

⁵⁶ Jon G. Allen, *Coping with Trauma: Hope through Understanding*, 2nd ed. (Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2004).

⁵⁷ In the United States context, those diagnosed with PTSD will often turn for help to therapists specially trained in trauma. In other contexts around the world, imaginative rituals and collective healing processes have been developed. See, for example, the work of Martha Cabrera, “Living and Surviving in a Multiply Wounded Country” describing her work in Nicaragua, http://www.google.com/#sclient=psy&hl=en&site=&source=hp&q=Martha+Cabrera%2C+%E2%80%99CLiving+and+Surviving+in+a+Multiply+Wounded+Country%E2%80%99D&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&oq=&gs_rfai=&pbx=1&fp=8d9c50a61d5b9175. Accessed September 27, 2010.

We thus facilitate healing when we help the afflicted cry out their sorrow, rage, and tears to God. Prayers of lament—crying out to God for deliverance—seem to be faith’s only alternative to despair.⁵⁸ Instead of protecting themselves against the pain, the afflicted are encouraged to go down into it, clinging to God’s promises as they do so. Listen to one such lament, in which the afflicted one directs her anguish toward God.

There comes a time when both body and soul
Enter into such a vast darkness
That one loses light and consciousness
And knows nothing more of God’s intimacy.

At such a time, when the light in the lantern burns out
The beauty of the lantern can no longer be seen,
With longing and distress we are reminded of our nothingness.

At such a time I pray to God:
“O God, this burden is too heavy for me!”
And God replies:
“I will take this burden first and clasp it close to Myself
And that way you may more easily bear it. ...”

If God leaves me unanointed, I could never recover.
Even if all the hills flowed with healing oils,
And all the waters contained healing powers,
And all the flowers and all the trees dripped with healing ointments,
Still, I could never recover.

“God, I will tear the heart of my soul in two
And you must lie therein.
You must lay yourself in the wounds of my soul.”⁵⁹

These words of Mechthild of Magdeburg, mystic of the thirteenth century, echo down through the centuries, offering a startling image of healing through the palpable presence of Christ’s own body. In her fervent prayer, Mechthild offers the wounds of her soul for healing through the intimate presence of Christ’s

⁵⁸ Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, “Prayers of Lament,” *Pray without Ceasing: Revitalizing Pastoral Care* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

⁵⁹ Marchienne Vroon Rienstra, *Swallow’s Nest: A Feminine Reading of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), Appendix. From *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* by Mechthild of Magdeburg, Cistercian nun (1210 – c. 1285).

broken body. Here we meet profound mystery. An image of union with Christ rises up from the depths and is given voice in her prayer. Only the full, living presence of a wounded Savior can heal her soul.

Psychologist Robert Stolorow speaks of the fundamental necessity of finding what he calls a “relational home” for traumatic experience. He writes, “Trauma is constituted in an intersubjective context in which severe emotional pain cannot find a relational home in which it can be held. In such a context, painful affect states become unendurable.”⁶⁰

Severe emotional pain cannot be endured if it does not have a relational home, someone to hold what cannot be borne.⁶¹ Ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ who are rooted and grounded in the love of God provide just such a relational home for all those who groan for the redemption of the world. They offer a steady, sturdy, compassionate and loving witness to all who have suffered trauma. Insofar as they thus participate in Christ’s own compassion, they become witnesses to and mediators of Christ’s miraculous grace.

CONCLUSION

In recent decades, pastoral theology has turned more and more to the public, social, and political dimensions of both affliction and pastoral care. Ministers of the church not only attend to individual members of their congregations but also participate in larger communities of outreach and care. Especially in the light of recent large-scale disasters, pastoral leaders need to respond with sensitivity to the needs of those who do not share the gospel narrative as the overarching context of meaning of their lives. I believe that it is crucial for us also to address questions such as these, even though they lie outside the scope of the present lecture.⁶²

⁶⁰ Robert D. Stolorow, *Trauma and Human Existence* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 10.

⁶¹ See also the example in Hunsinger, “Keeping an Open Heart in Troubled Times: Self-empathy as a Christian Spiritual Practice.” The experience described there illustrates the importance of having one’s pain “witnessed,” as described by Weingarten in *Common Shock*.

⁶² Jeannette Sutton writes about the wariness that disaster coordinators have toward those providers of spiritual care who volunteer their assistance. “There has been unease about hidden agendas, the appropriateness of religiously oriented interventions, and concern for victims who might feel that contact with some minister-types is intrusive and assaultive” (“Convergence of the Faithful: Spiritual Care Response to Disaster and Mass Casualty Events,” *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 16, no. 1 [Fall, 2006]: 19. Through ministries of “presence” and “hospitality,” spiritual care providers in the public sphere offer comfort and reassurance while helping victims to draw upon their “own religious and/or spiritual resources in order to construct meaning out of chaos.” They respect personal boundaries, know how to work in an interfaith manner, and are responsive to training from the disaster assistance professionals such as the American Red Cross.

As leaders in their own church communities, pastoral leaders need to recognize the power inherent in their position to frame and interpret any traumatic event that has occurred. In so doing, they can either inflame the situation by escalating anxiety (through name-calling, rushing to judgment and blame, using us/them dichotomies, labeling dissenting views, or withholding or misrepresenting the facts)⁶³ or decrease anxiety and facilitate healing by opening channels of communication among all parties involved.⁶⁴ As they offer a secure holding environment to strengthen frayed bonds of trust, and as they call upon God to minister to the community in its pain, they offer space to the hurting to tell their story. In some cases, nearly everyone in the community has been hurt by trauma, in strangely diverse ways.⁶⁵ In this kind of situation, it is essential to refrain from moralizing or blaming and instead position themselves in such a way that all persons can be heard.⁶⁶ The community needs to gather in order to share their common grief, which serves to counteract the fear, shame, isolation, and horror of what has occurred.⁶⁷

The pastoral care of the community finds its final locus in ritual, psalm, and song, in worship and the mystery of the Lord's Supper. Personal trauma and loss are woven into the losses of the larger community as the liturgy unfolds. That which is most deeply personal becomes part of the communal lament of the people of God through the ages. Walter Brueggeman reminds us that "the public dimension of grief is deep underneath personal loss and, for the most part, not easily articulated among us. But grief will not be worked well or adequately until attention goes underneath the personal to the public and communal. My expectation is that pastors, liturgically and pastorally, most need to provide opportunity and script for lament and complaint and grief for a long time. No second maneuver after grief shall be permitted to crowd in upon this raw,

⁶³ Volkan Volmik, *Blind Trust: Large Groups and their Leaders in Times of Crisis and Terror* (Charlottesville: Pitchstone Publishing), cited in STAR training, "Part III: The Trauma Healing Journey, Breaking the Cycles of Violence, Eastern Mennonite University, 2002.

⁶⁴ See Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Intercourse: Good Books, 2002), 67–69.

⁶⁵ It is worth noting that ministers themselves are vulnerable to any trauma afflicting their community. Pastors and church leaders occupy a unique dual role, as those called to give pastoral care, and as those human beings who are themselves personally affected. Those in caregiving roles need to be exquisitely attuned to their own needs for care, especially when their immediate community is in crisis. Ministers' families are vitally affected and need support as well. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) consists of PCUSA pastors, elders, and mental health professionals who are trained in trauma and crisis response, who offer companionship and support to church leaders in congregations affected by "human-caused disasters." For this point, I am indebted to Katherine Wiebe, a Princeton Theological Seminary alumna who serves on the PDA.

⁶⁶ Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, 67–69.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 19–41.

elemental requirement.”⁶⁸ By permitting an unrelieved descent into the raw emotions of grief within the secure boundaries of ritual space, hope and trust may be paradoxically restored.⁶⁹

As the church gathers for worship, we are told of a God who is “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Cor. 1). In worship we find space both to mourn and to hope, as we wait with painful longing for the redemption of the world. We find comfort in the midst of affliction when we are reminded that the One who descends into every human hell we create, and unwittingly or maliciously perpetuate, is the very One who sits at the right hand of the Father in glory.

The community that responds to trauma in these ways will, by the grace and power of God, find itself stronger, wiser, more compassionate, and more resilient. Its collective story will be one of overcoming adversity together rather than a story of shame, re-victimization, fear, and silencing. By reclaiming the essential practices of our faith—compassionate witnessing, communal lament, and public worship—we “enable people to continue to love God in the face of evil and suffering and in so doing to prevent tragic suffering from becoming evil.”⁷⁰ As John Swinton writes, “Loving God does not take away the pain that [trauma] inflicts, but it *does* transform it.”⁷¹ May God work out our salvation by bearing what cannot be borne, by transforming our mourning into longing, our longing into lament, our lament into hope, and, through the redemption of this beloved world, our hope into joy.⁷² ■

⁶⁸ Walter Brueggeman <http://www.sermonmall.com/WTC/wtc22.html>, as cited by John Swinton in *Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 121.

⁶⁹ See “Unspeakable Things Spoken: Globalization, Imperial Trauma and the Development of AfricanAmerican Identities,” by Cedric C. Johnson, for a description and analysis of a whole community engaged in a transformative healing process as they confront horrific historic and ongoing trauma. Princeton Theological Seminary Ph.D. dissertation, May, 2010.

⁷⁰ John Swinton, *Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 85.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷² I am indebted to colleagues George Hunsinger, Katherine Sonderegger, Katherine Wiebe, and Barbara Chaapel for valuable comments on earlier drafts of this lecture.

Lecture

Between Text and Community: Jews and Christians in the Second Century

by Judith M. Lieu

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It is commonplace to refer to Judaism and Christianity—and also to Islam, which will not be discussed here—as “religions of the book.” The label is self-evidently a slippery one: does it mean religions of *the* book, a specific one, presumably TANAK or Bible, perhaps with one eye particularly on that which is common to both? Or does it identify religions for which the written word is, if not paramount, then at least central, particularly in contrast to such other religious traditions for which any written form is alien? The two possibilities are not exclusive: once a specific book occupies a central role, it almost inevitably provokes the production around it of further writing; this may be in order to ensure that it is disseminated, for insiders or outsiders, in the original tongue or through translation; particularly with the passage of time, the need for clarification and interpretation may become unavoidable and provoke additional “books.” But the label “religion of the book” will also invite protest: some will object that “by the book alone” engenders an arid, impersonal grasp of what lies at the heart of religion; that it obscures the essential core which is experience, and that it ignores the lives and practice of the real individuals without whom religion may be a purely theoretical construct.

¹ I am grateful to President Torrance and the New Testament Faculty of the Seminary for their warm hospitality. The paper has been lightly edited to compensate for the visual images used in the original presentation, which do not appear in the current version.

When we move into antiquity, this last objection acquires further ammunition. Estimations of literacy are in any society, even in the present, notoriously unstable, for literacy itself is not a fixed measurement. Even so, it is generally agreed that in the second century, the focus of this paper, only a minority of people were literate.² Allowing for that fuzziness of definition, a common estimation is that 10 percent of the population were literate. Moreover, that 10 percent would have been concentrated in the particular segment of society that is frequently labeled “the elite,” although this can be misleading: it should be remembered that scribal proficiency could be a specific skill exercised, for example, by a slave with that role in the household. The truly leisured, on the other hand, might expect others both to write for them and to read to them. Were things any different in Jewish society? Both Josephus and Philo claim that every adult Jewish male knew the Scriptures, and this has led some to suppose that literacy among Jews was higher; on the other hand, parallel cases suggest that the existence in society of one super-significant written text can hinder rather than promote a broader literacy. So, at least one recent study has argued that generally the Jewish population mirrored society at large.³ Christians are unlikely to have been any more unusual. Second-century critic of Christianity Celsus accused them of targeting the ignorant, the uneducated, the stupid, and, of course, especially women (Origen, *Against Celsus* III.55). It is not necessary to go as far as this, but it still seems likely that at least for the first two hundred years the movement made only limited inroads into the educated elite, perhaps indicating even lower levels of competency in both reading and writing.

On the other hand, there is a wealth of evidence for the importance of texts and writing for both Jews and Christians in this period. An obvious example would be the community represented by the Dead Sea Scrolls; even if it constituted a special case, hardly a cross section of society, the Scrolls still bear witness to a range of textual activity that is not entirely unparalleled elsewhere in the Jewish and then in the Christian world. What is significant about that activity is that alongside the community-specific literature, such as the Community Rule Scroll or War Scroll, there is an extensive body of writings stimulated by and dependent on the Scriptures: commentaries, rewritings, for example, of Genesis, new compositions, as well as copies of the scriptural texts themselves, in Greek as well as in Hebrew. Some of this material is also specific to this com-

² There is now a substantial bibliography; see William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); M. Beard et al., *Literacy in the Roman World. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series #3*, ed. J. H. Humphrey (Ann Arbor: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2001).

³ See C. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine. Texts & Studies in Ancient Judaism*. (Tübingen: Mohr, 2001).

munity, such as the commentaries (or Pesharim) on the prophets that interpret Nahum or Habakkuk as directly referring to the experience of the community itself, and in particular to the hostile or irreligious actions of their opponents. Such commentary, especially because it is given authority by the secret revelation given to their revered teacher, would give those who studied them a place in divine history and would provide them with a justification for their present marginalization at the hands of a majority, a majority who were now scripturally demonstrated to be in the wrong. Other texts represent what is now called the “Rewritten Bible,” alternative or expanded versions of the stories of the heroes of the Torah: Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. Some of these provide links with other, similar efforts written in Greek, probably among Jewish communities in the Diaspora. Even leaving aside the different phenomena that crystallized into the rabbinic literature, there must be a strong expectation that such literary activity continued in the second century, even if it is more difficult to trace with certainty. Given time, it would be possible to compare how early Christianity offers a similar example of the abundant production of texts, some community-specific texts, and others reworking familiar material and genres—although in this case most of the evidence points to its being initially only in Greek.

This rich textual activity and productivity has led both early Judaism and early Christianity to be described as “textual communities.” The notion of textual communities was initially developed as a way of understanding the changing function of literacy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; here historian Brian Stock traced how a text or a body of texts could define and shape a group even if that group included only a few members who were literate. These guides would interpret the foundational texts and in doing so would provide the group with a worldview of their own. Illiterate members of the group would acquire what we might call textual skills; through hearing and perhaps passing on orally their foundational texts and their authoritative meaning they would practice how texts work.⁴ Although more space would be needed to trace this out in detail, it is not difficult to see how the distinctive worldview fixed in the written texts of both Jews and Christians became part of the reality in which they lived; this worldview often existed in tension with the worldview of their neighbors, which in turn was shaped in part by their key texts.

Worth noting at this juncture is that Stock’s work and his notion of textual communities counsel against the false dichotomy that is sometimes made between orality and textuality, between the spoken and heard word and the written word.

⁴ B. Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990).

As recent work on orality has made clear, it is wrong to think of a linear process, of one coming first to be followed by the other, of an oral stage or transmission followed by the written form and literacy; neither is one characteristic of some groups in society, nor other of others, oral transmission more natural to women or to the so-called non-elite, writing the sphere of males and the powerful who thus control knowledge.⁵ Certainly it is often presented in these terms: the move to written texts with the authority given them is analyzed in terms of gender and of power. In practice, there is a to and fro between the oral and the written: oral retelling continues after and alongside writing down; written accounts, once read, generate oral repetition and expansion. This is not to deny that some might feel ambivalence about the relationship between what is spoken and what is written—consider the competing claims for trust made by the whispered story, “gossip,” and what is found printed in the newspaper! A similar ambivalence was felt in the ancient world and could be manipulated in different ways. A rich example is provided by Paul: in a written letter, 2 Corinthians, he engages in a complex reinterpretation of Scripture, “what is written,” in order to extrapolate a contrast between the inflexible letter and the unrestrained spirit; yet he refers to his readers as “our letter written on our hearts, known and read by all,” although he immediately qualifies this as “written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God” (2 Cor. 3:1–6).⁶

Obscure early Christian writer Papias wrote five volumes of exegesis on the “words of the ‘Lord’”; in the preface he explained how he searched for those people who could report about the disciples and their followers “because I considered that things from books would not benefit me as much as the living and abiding voice” (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* III.39.4). That sentiment plays on a commonplace in the ancient world but even so may not merely be a conventional excuse.⁷ The tension becomes entrenched in another form when Paul’s words sometimes led later Christian writers to associate Jewish tradition with “the written letter,” while the Christian is associated with the spoken, or even proclaimed, word—an association that continued to color even scholarly representations of Judaism until recent times. There are equally good reasons for reversing this opposition: an early Christian author, the writer of the Gospel according to John, ended his account of the deeds of Jesus with the words, “These things are

⁵ Again there is a growing bibliography; see J. Dewey, ed., *Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature. Semeia 65* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995).

⁶ A further level of complexity would be added if 2 Corinthians is itself a deliberate compilation of earlier written fragments.

⁷ L. Alexander, “The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts,” in D. Clines et al., ed., *The Bible in Three Dimensions. JSOTSS 87* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 221–47.

written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ” (John 20:31). By contrast, as the very name of the “Mishnah” demonstrates, and as is exemplified in *Pirke Aboth*, in the second and third centuries rabbinic Judaism at least is marked by a self-conscious ideology of oral transmission.⁸ The key theme here is “ideology,” the way in which concepts associated with oral and written word are used and are appealed to.

These introductory explorations already bring us to the heart of the subject. What has become apparent is that to speak about a religion or a people “of the book” is far from straightforward. The relationship between written word and people is a complex and a political one; yet it is also one that it is important to understand in order to catch something of what is going on in the second century, a period so important for the shaping of Jewish and Christian communities and of the relationship between them. In what follows I will investigate in particular two aspects of this process: first, the importance of texts, here especially “*the book*” and the further writings it stimulates, for shaping these communities; second, the attempt, which is necessarily more tentative, to discern the actual lives of those communities, or specific communities within them, and their use of texts. This shall take the form of a series of interconnected snapshots.

“THE CURSES WRITTEN IN DEUTERONOMY”

Acmonia in ancient Phrygia lies in an area where there is considerable archaeological evidence of a Jewish community, starting from the first century CE when a non-Jewish dignitary, Julia Severa, helped fund the foundation of the synagogue.⁹ Among the slightly later remains is a remarkable series of funerary stones, mostly dated from the mid-third century CE, a number of which invoke curses on anyone who disturbs the grave. So, for example, a much cited stone identifies the grave it once marked as by Aurelius Phrougianos and his wife for his or her mother and for their daughter; it closes with a severe warning: “If anyone will bury another corpse or abuse the grave by purchase he will get the curses written in Deuteronomy.”¹⁰ The reference here is clearly to the long string

⁸ “Moses received the Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Joshua; Joshua to the elders; the elders to the prophets; the prophets handed it on to the men of the great assembly. They said three things: be deliberate in judgement, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah” (*Pirke Aboth* 1.1).

⁹ See E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)*, rev. and ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986) III.1, 27–32; P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series* 69 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 58–84.

¹⁰ See W. Ameling, ed., *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis II. Kleinasien. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism* 99 (Tübingen: Mohr, 2004), 364–68 (no. 173); Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*,

of curses that Moses utters against all who infringe God's covenant in Deuteronomy 27–28. That none of these are against those who infringe grave rights is irrelevant; they serve as unconditional and uncompromising declarations of divine judgment.

This could invite a long list of questions, not all of which can be addressed here; for example, the use of curses to protect a tomb is characteristic of this part of ancient Asia Minor and is found among all communities—"pagan," Christian, and Jewish—a phenomenon that may be an indication of shared understandings of death. Such practices are also one part of the widespread evidence in the world of this time for the summoning of supernaturally directed punishment against personal enemies, against rivals in love, rivals in ambition, or others. Some would want to label this "magic" rather than religion, namely, the manipulation for one's own benefit of natural and supernatural forces (if these can be distinguished); however, a satisfactory and accepted definition of magic is a far from straightforward matter, as is its connection with religion (which some might define in similar terms).

Numerous so-called magical texts and artefacts have survived from antiquity, and a substantial number of these use more or less recognizable Jewish terms—names of angels, variations on the epithets given God—often as names for the forces being summoned to carry out the curse, or the blessing, or other action. It has to be a matter of debate whether this simply reflects a sense that the more "esoteric" and "foreign" something sounds the more effective it is believed to be—a common phenomenon—or whether it points to the actual involvement of Jewish practitioners.¹¹ Scholarship has left behind the older view that such evidence could be dismissed as "syncretistic," and either as symptomatic of the degradation of diaspora or Hellenistic Judaism, or as "not really Jewish." For present purposes, the key point is that the curses Aurelius Phrougianos invokes appear to gain their effectiveness, not because they were spoken by Moses, who was widely associated with magic, but because they are written in Deuteronomy. The written text has power.

61; P. W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology* (Kampen: Kok, 1991), 54–60; H. M. Strubbe, "Curses Against Violation of the Grave in Jewish Epitaphs from Asia Minor," in J. W. van Henten & P. W. van der Horst, *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums* 21 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 70–128, 89–92, 115–17.

¹¹ See G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

The inscription is in Greek, and the name “Deuteronomy” presupposes the world of the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, commonly known as the Septuagint, although probably best labeled more simply “the Old Greek,” which had presumably long spread throughout the Diaspora. Josephus and Philo take this translation for granted, as also did the early Christian writers who wrote in Greek. One of the oldest surviving fragments of the Greek Bible, probably to be dated to the second century BCE, is of Deuteronomy (pRylands 458). Presumably this or a subsequent translation was read and studied within the Jewish community at Acmonia, although how they interpreted it remains among the many lacunae in our knowledge of the Diaspora.

It is therefore left to the imagination to wonder how the inscription with its curses “worked.” Some passersby would be able to read the inscription, but many more would rely on its being read to them. Because such invectives against illegitimate occupation of graves were conventional, most people would broadly know what to expect. Perhaps for some the mere identification of particular curses would have carried an impressive note regardless of whether “Deuteronomy” conveyed anything specific. Yet somewhere within this maze of possibilities Deuteronomy itself is known and is making its impact.

Who was Aurelius Phrougianos? His name reveals little other than that his family received citizenship in the early third century; a list of offices held by him inscribed on the left side of the monument indicates that he was of some stature in city life. It has generally been assumed that he was Jewish, but one cannot exclude the fact that he was a Christian—for Deuteronomy was important for Christians too.¹² The same applies to his intended target: Was he warning people who knew the curses to which he was referring? Again, though it is often assumed these were Jews, Christians would also identify the reference. Indeed, it may be wrong to treat this as a stark alternative: from the surviving inscriptions from Asia Minor it is often difficult to distinguish Jewish from Christian formulae; the conclusion may—although it does not necessarily—follow that there were not always sharp boundaries between the Jewish and Christian communities.¹³

On the other hand, the inscription could be taken as evidence that members of the gentile population were sufficiently aware of the Jewish Scriptures to take

¹² See Ameling, *Inscriptiones*, 367–68; Strubbe, “Curses,” 89–92.

¹³ See P. Herz, “Einleitung” in P. Herz & J. Kobes, eds., *Ethnische und religiöse Minderheiten in Kleinasien von der hellenistischen Antike bis in das byzantinische Mittelalter* (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 1998), xiii–xx.

the warning seriously. Indeed, it is not impossible that Phrougianos himself was a gentile who was impressed by the sacred writings of the Jews and who suspected that they might be powerful. Whatever the origins of the translation into Greek of the scriptures, they had long made possible some sort of dialogue between Jews and non-Jews. The evidence for a detailed familiarity on the part of non-Jews with the Scriptures may be slight, but is not to be dismissed.¹⁴

Moreover, casual visitors to a synagogue, and even more so those with an interest in Jewish practice, would surely have been fully aware of the place of the Scripture scrolls.¹⁵ It has often been argued that the importance of written texts and their interpretation could make Judaism seem more like a philosophy than a religion in the ancient world and that that was why some found it attractive. Certainly that is how some Jewish apologists, like Josephus, tried to present it. But this epitaph may reveal a different facet of the relationship between text and community: both how a text might seem to identify a community, and also what uses a community might make of a text—the status a text could give to a community in an economy of power.

JUSTIN MARTYR

The curses written in Deuteronomy form a bridge to a very different setting, to Justin Martyr and his account of an encounter and debate with a Jew named Trypho. The encounter supposedly took place around 135 CE, traditionally but not certainly in Ephesus, but Justin wrote it up some fifteen to twenty years later, probably in Rome. *Dialogue with Trypho* is the first surviving example of what becomes an important literary tradition in Christian writings, writings “against the Jews.” These writings are important for a number of reasons: through them can be traced the developing polemic and a growing set of standard accusations against the Jews. In practice these writings are probably driven at least in part by the internal tensions that early Christians experienced as a result of their own origins as a movement born within Judaism and yet one that claimed a decisively new message for all people; these tensions could be handled by being projected outside. Inevitably, such accounts, even this one by Justin, are not documentary records or transcripts; Justin manipulates his dialogue partner Trypho throughout and he provides him with his script. Yet, despite this, the

¹⁴ See Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁵ That there were such is certain even if the label “Godfearers” is unhelpful.

topics they debate are neither whimsy nor purely academic; with careful reading through them we can catch glimpses of actual dynamics of social and religious relationships.¹⁶

Well into their debate, Trypho, who has been gradually losing ground, sets out the fundamental objection that Jesus cannot be all that the Christians claim for him because he died a death subject to a curse as written in the law: “Direct us then from the Scriptures so that we may be persuaded by you. Demonstrate to us whether he should be crucified and so die shamefully and dishonorable through the death which is cursed in the Law. For we cannot arrive at any such view” (*Dial.* 90.1). Neither Trypho nor Justin uses the name “Deuteronomy,” but the reference is unmistakably to Deuteronomy 21:23, which stipulates that anyone hung on a tree is to be taken down before nightfall, “for anyone hung from a tree is under God’s curse.” It is far from certain, and perhaps improbable, that an appeal to this verse reflects a genuine Jewish charge, for it works only in the Greek version and it is at odds with the tradition of Jewish exegesis of the Hebrew original. Paul had appealed to the same verse, also relying on the Greek translation, when writing to the Galatians (Gal. 3:13); however, Justin does not cite Paul either here or elsewhere, nor does he replicate his argument. Instead he responds to Trypho’s invitation by engaging in a series of exegetical gymnastics through other scriptural passages; the result of these is that the verse from Deuteronomy not only does not disqualify Jesus, but in fact it is turned against the Jews, whom Justin accuses of cursing in their synagogues both Jesus and Christians (*Dial.* 96.2). What is most important for our purposes is that Justin understands the issue not just as a matter of how the death of Jesus is to be interpreted, or of what the passage from Deuteronomy means; much more fundamental for him is the question as to who has the key to the correct interpretation of all the Scriptures—and he takes it for granted that there can be only one correct interpretation.

In the chapters of the *Dialogue* (98–106) that follow this explanation of Deuteronomy Justin cements his claim to correct interpretation by carrying out a reading of Psalm 22 (21 LXX). What he does here is to take this psalm as a partly coded but partly transparent narrative of Jesus and particularly of Jesus’s death; he retells that story not in the sequence of the events as now recorded in the canonical gospels but in the sequence of the psalm. Justin does not say, as Christians would later claim, that the psalm was fulfilled by Jesus; rather he asserts that it was “written with reference to Christ” (*Dial.* 99.1). Perhaps

¹⁶ See Judith M. Lieu, *Image and Reality: the Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 103–53.

anticipating that some might query this, at regular intervals he explains that something similar was written about Jesus in what he calls “the memoirs of the apostles” (100.4; 101.3; 102.5; 103.6, 8; 105.1). It is likely that these memoirs of the apostles either were one or more of the canonical gospels or were something like them; in calling them “memoirs,” however, Justin is according them only documentary significance, a secondary supporting role. The psalm is for him the primary or the controlling text. It might be said that what Justin is engaged in is a performance of the written text, of Psalm 22. Although this has been set down and transmitted as a written exercise, it is not difficult to imagine it as a spoken or proclaimed one; after all, it was through hearing that most people encountered texts.

On one level this is again a case of differing interpretations being generated by distance between the participants, or even of them generating and reinforcing that distance. So Justin claims that the Jews apply the psalms to Hezekiah or to some other historical figure, and in some cases there is support for this in later Jewish exegesis. Yet much more than merely differing interpretations is at stake here; for Justin this psalm, and indeed all the scriptures, properly belong to “us,” the Christians. Naturally, he knows that Trypho and his other Jewish dialogue partners are familiar with the scriptures, but he cannot admit that they in any way share them: “They are not yours but ours for we believe them but when you read them you do not understand their intention” (*Dial.* 29.2). Justin even takes it for granted that copies of the scriptures would normally be found in what he calls “*their* synagogues”; indeed, it seems likely that he may have consulted them there.¹⁷

Scrolls were expensive and it certainly cannot be assumed that every small Christian community would have possessed a full set, if any. Yet, even so, Justin goes so far as to assert that the copies that they, the Jews, have are defective; he accuses the Jewish teachers of editing their own copies in order to cut out key passages that predicted Christ in absolute clarity (*Dial.* 72–73). The example he gives for this is Psalm 95, where he asserts that it should read not “The Lord reigns” but “The Lord reigns from the tree.” That, he claims, is the original text, the text written by the first translators of the Scriptures into Greek; he even appeals here to the story of that translation at the behest of Ptolemy, familiar from the *Letter of Aristeas* and other Jewish texts. In practice, the reverse is the case: “The Lord reigns” is the earliest form of the text. A probable explanation is that in his catechesis as a Christian, Justin received

¹⁷ Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 126–29.

appropriate prophetic extracts believed to point to Jesus, extracts which in the course of their use and interpretation had become suitably “improved.” Conceivably these extracts took the form of written collections, but they may equally have been part of oral teaching passed on, or probably a combination of these, with the consequence that oral commentary could easily become part of the written text. When Justin wanted to extend his scriptural argument and inspected copies in the synagogues, he would have found a more authentic text in terms of faithfulness to the tradition, but that was something he could hardly be expected to recognize.

Clearly, once again this invites a picture of a complex set of relationships between text and community, and community and community. On one level this picture might be perceived as a shared text held alongside opposing interpretations; this would be similar to, but perhaps more extreme than, the conviction held by the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls that the prophecies of Nahum referred to *them*, a conviction that other Jewish groups would have rejected. It may have been the case that the reality of the shared text also formed the basis of some social realities—as suggested above, Justin may have consulted the copies of the scriptures kept in a local synagogue. Initially, such a scenario might seem unlikely given his accusations that the Jewish teachers cursed Christ in the synagogues. But it would be wrong to imagine the synagogue, or early Christian churches, as buildings that were not very visitor-friendly and were used only at certain times of the week for internal religious activities.

Justin himself seems to have operated more in the framework of a form of philosophical school, a teacher with his disciples and other interested listeners. In some cases a synagogue perhaps also functioned like this, at least in part, a setting where texts could be interpreted and debated. The heat of the debate to the extent that it can be overheard through the *Dialogue* only reinforces the central role played by this particular text both for Justin’s circles and for those of Trypho—in contrast, for example, to other text-based groups in the ancient city where Homer or Plato played the pivotal role. From an outsider’s perspective this might look like a single and idiosyncratic if somewhat fractious community focused around a single text, “The Scripture.” From Justin’s perspective, however, it is a different text, not just because he has, or because he thinks that there should be, verses that the others omit but because for him the text and its meaning cannot be separated. Texts are not just neutral and stable artefacts: read through different eyes, different lenses, they are different texts—different texts that generate different communities, communities that will come to be labeled “Jews” and “Christians.”

READING JOSHUA

A third snapshot returns again to something more tangible, papyrus fragments of the book of Joshua in Greek known as Schøyen Papyrus 2648.¹⁸ This papyrus, probably originally found at Oxyrhynchus and coming from a monastery in the region, apparently was written around 200 CE. In what follows, it will become evident that this is a Christian piece of Joshua—not merely claimed by the Christians as in the case of Justin but copied by a Christian scribe.

First, however, it is necessary to sketch the larger story within which this papyrus may be a player. An important episode in that story was the translation of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek in Egypt, where there was a very large and important Jewish community, most of whom knew little if any Hebrew. Although that process started in the third century BCE with the Torah, before long the prophets, including Joshua, would have been added. At that juncture, still before the turn of the eras, there was no fixed idea of a canon, of a closed group of sacred Scriptures, although the seeds of the idea were sprouting. Indeed, at this stage there was no single version even of the books of the Torah, for there was no authority or way of ensuring absolute uniformity.¹⁹ As has been seen, alongside the Jews of the Diaspora, Christians, who quickly became predominately Greek-speaking and certainly Greek-writing, used the Greek translation (or translations) of the Scriptures for their own reading, argument, and interpretation.

At this point an older argument was often made that the Christian use of the Greek Scriptures led to three results. The first result was said to be that Jewish communities stopped reading the so-called Septuagint and, where Hebrew was not known, that they started making and using other Greek translations that were much closer to the Hebrew—most notably the translations associated with Aquila or with Theodotion. The Septuagint, in this view, was taken over, or appropriated, by the Christians. Second, according to this view, the Jewish authorities needed to find a way of excluding the sort of Christian rereading already traced in Justin. One step in this direction may have been the establishment and closure of a canon, the body of authoritative texts, which effectively would exclude the addition of any other subversive texts such as the Christian gospels. Some scholars have suggested that the formation of the Mishnah and its publication at the beginning of the third century CE might be understood in this

¹⁸ See <http://www.schoyencollection.com/GreekNT.htm#2648>, where the image given is of Joshua 9:27–11:3 (accessed on February 8, 2011).

¹⁹ See the evidence of the biblical manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

light: it offered its own lens through which the Scriptures were to be interpreted.²⁰ Whether deliberately or coincidentally, the Christians were at the same time, during the second and third centuries, formulating and giving authoritative status to their own interpretive lens, the future New Testament. Thus, Mishnah and New Testament would represent two parallel developments whose effect was to frame the Scriptures and so to make them function differently, read differently, and in this way produce different communities.

Third, according to this view, the difference between the Jewish Scriptures as consistently written on scrolls—like most “serious” texts in the ancient world—and the emergence of the Christian codex format has to be understood in the same fashion. The surprising dominance of the codex format for Christian texts on papyrus and parchment even from an early date has provoked widespread debate, particularly in view of the fact that elsewhere the codex was only slowly adopted for more literary texts. Various solutions have been posited: Did this reflect the less literary background and pretensions of the early Christians? Did the practice start with a single text, a collection of Paul’s letters, or a gospel, which then became a normative pattern? Alternatively, the first model may have been the handy collection of prophetic texts, such as was suggested above, that Justin used. Or was the codex easier for itinerant preachers to carry around and to consult? More important for the argument here is the suggestion that Christians were in this way deliberately differentiating their practice and their Scriptures from the Jewish use of scrolls. At least one scholar has suggested that in so doing the Christians desacralized the Scriptures, taking them out of the world of the sacred, authoritative, holy.²¹

Each of the three components of this reconstruction portrays the relationship between text and community as taking material form—the type of translation, the contents of the Scriptures, or the formation of a further text to be read alongside them, even the physical, visible format. Each is presented as marking the difference between Jewish and Christian communities but also as securing and reinforcing that difference.

²⁰ See Philip S. Alexander, “The Formation of the Biblical Canon in Rabbinic Judaism,” in Philip S. Alexander & Jean-Daniel Kaestli, ed., *The Canon of Scripture in Jewish and Christian Tradition. Publications de l’Institut romand des sciences bibliques 4* (Lausanne: Éditions du Zèbre, 2007), 57–80, 77–78.

²¹ Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 12–15. See also L. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artefacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 43–93.

The papyrus fragment of Joshua, Schøyen 2648, can be located within such a scenario. Hence, it comes from a codex and not from a scroll; apparently the codex contained only Joshua, allowing no further conclusions regarding its relationship with other scriptural books, although the same scribe seems to have also copied another codex of Leviticus. However, what makes it undoubtedly Christian is the way the name of Joshua is written. A further characteristic of many Christian papyri is that they use abbreviations for certain significant or technical terms, particularly terms associated with the divine—God, Lord, Christ, Savior, Jesus—the so-called *nomina sacra*. In Schøyen 2648, the words “God” and “Lord” are abbreviated in this way, but so is the name “Joshua,” which in Greek routinely takes the form “Iesous.” Evidently, only a Christian scribe would have seen here a name, “Jesus,” which merited treatment in the same way as God and Lord.

This, too, invites invoking another scenario within that broader narrative. Justin, in his conviction that the Scriptures speak of Jesus, found evidence in what some might believe to be the most unlikely places. An important text for him was Exodus 23:20: “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell this people: I am sending my messenger before me in order to protect you on the journey, so as to lead you into the land which I have prepared for you. Pay attention to him and listen to him; do not disobey him, for he will not excuse you; for my name is on him.’” Justin’s interpretation of this verse relies on a characteristic style of exegesis of a textual conundrum. When “Joshua” first appears in the narrative of Numbers he is named “Hoshea,” and Moses is credited with changing this to “Joshua” (Num. 13:1–16). Ancient commentators regularly highlighted such problems, unlike their modern counterparts, who quickly resort to the presence of different literary sources. So, for example, Justin accuses the Jews of paying attention to the different spellings of Abram or Abraham and Sarai or Sarah but of failing to understand this one. His own explanation is that Moses deliberately renamed Joshua, who was to be his successor, and in so doing he not only prefigured Jesus but also thus indicated that Jesus bears God’s name, “My name is on him” (*Dial.* 113.2).

Consequently, it would seem natural to conclude that this papyrus fragment can serve as a symbol of the differentiation between Jewish and Christian communities at the end of the second century: the same text but also in significant ways a different text—septuagintal, a codex, with the name of “Joshua/ Jesus” treated as a *nomen sacrum*.

However, while not questioning the “Christian” character of this papyrus, the story may be somewhat more complicated than this approach presupposes.

Recent scholarship has shown that in fact Jewish communities did continue to use Greek versions of the Scriptures, and even the Septuagint, long after it used to be thought that the Christians had taken this over.²² There was not such a sharp and decisive separation in their favored translations as used to be thought. Furthermore, it is by no means beyond doubt that the use of the codex for the Scriptures was a Christian innovation. In the case of copies of the Scriptures in Greek in a codex format that do not have any explicitly and indisputably “Christian” marks only a circular argument can assume that they must be so.²³ It may indeed be that to pose the stark alternative “Jewish *or* Christian” does not reflect the self-understanding of those who produced or those who read these texts, who may have claimed both epithets.

Similarly, the origin of the use of “*nomina sacra*,” divine abbreviations, is still much debated. Some have suggested that it may have developed from the way that Jewish scribes avoided using the divine name when copying the Scriptures and used other terms or representations.²⁴ The development from such a practice to the more formulaic and extensive one is hardly straightforward, but neither is it inconceivable. This suggests that lines of continuity are as important as sudden discontinuous breaks. It is important to take seriously the limited geographical spread of the surviving evidence. An intriguing, and as yet unanswerable, question is what form Christian Scriptures from the land of the rabbis took: codex or scrolls? When rabbinic texts forbid the reading of the books of the heretics, *sifrei minim*, were these recognizable by their different format?²⁵

It is sometimes supposed that if Jews and Christians are “religions of the Book,” what differentiates them can be embodied in the language that develops in Christianity of Old Testament versus New Testament. In this more ecumenical age some prefer to speak of Hebrew Scriptures and Christian testament, and perhaps encourage meeting and discussion around them. Such labeling runs the risk of provoking new misunderstandings, and it is not immaterial that this paper has barely mentioned “New Testament,” even while speaking of a distinctive “Christian Scripture.”

²² Rajak, *Translation*, 278–313.

²³ For example, PKöln 967, a codex from c. 200CE; see <http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/ifa/NRWakademie/papyrologie/PTheol1.html#daniel>.

²⁴ Professor Robert Kraft of the University of Pennsylvania has done much to challenge overly hasty assumptions. See his home page, at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rak/kraft.html>.

²⁵ For example, tYad. 2.13; bSabb 116a–b. It is disputed whether or not this refers to the Christian gospels in some cases.

In this formative period of the second century it becomes evident that the text is more than simply the words modern people read from printed Bibles, essentially the same each time they buy a new copy; in the ancient world texts are fluid and unstable. The text can encompass different meanings and it can work or function in different ways. On the other hand, readings of the text do generate difference and sustain difference, and that difference becomes embodied in particular groups.

In the complex processes of the second century that led to the emergence of Judaism and Christianity, texts certainly did play a vital role. Yet such “isms” or “ities” are abstract and difficult to conceptualize. It is by recognizing in principle and by encountering through chance examples the interplay of texts and readers that we may enter into the social mix of the daily lives of the peoples of the book.²⁶ ■

²⁶ An earlier form of this lecture was given at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, for whose hospitality I am most grateful.

Lecture

God among the Gods: Defining Deity in a Differentiated Religious Context

by Patrick D. Miller

Patrick D. Miller is Charles T. Haley Professor of Old Testament Theology Emeritus. He delivered this lecture as the second lecture of the Stone Lectures, on October 4, 2010, in the Main Lounge.¹

Although I grew up in a family deeply rooted in the Reformed tradition and constantly reading and learning the psalms, I do not recall encountering Psalm 82 until I was in graduate school, where I was given it as an exegesis assignment. It was not like anything else I knew of in the Psalter or, for that matter, in the rest of the Old Testament. Now, of course, there are connections, and I want to speak about them, but the psalm seemed to me to be *sui generis*. It still does, and though I have written about it in other contexts,² I continue to be drawn to it and feel not only its uniqueness but its power and significance.

I am not alone in that regard. In *The Birth of Christianity*, New Testament scholar John Dominic Crossan has called this psalm “the single most important text in the Christian Bible.”³ That is a large claim for any text—and very interesting coming from a Jesus scholar such as Crossan. Whether one agrees with him or not, he manages to whet one’s appetite for looking at this relatively obscure and fairly unique text.

¹ A shorter version of this lecture, delivered at the University of Heidelberg, May 7, 2010, is to appear in the journal *Evangelische Theologie*.

² See P. D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 120–24.

³ John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately after the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 575. Cf. J. Clinton McCann Jr., “The Single Most Important Text in the Entire Bible: Toward a Theology of the Psalms,” in Rolf Jacobson, *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 63–75.

THE ONE AND THE MANY

In some respects, Psalm 82 is the closest thing we have in the scriptures to a truly mythological piece, a poem that is set entirely in the world of the gods. And it is couched in a way that suggests it represents a turning point in the history of religions. That is, one cannot deal with this text without seeing in its structure and movement a proposal for how one is to view the divine world, the world of the gods, one that suggests some movement and not simply a mute and unchanging reality. Of course, the movement may be very much a perception from the human perspective, but certainly in this text, that movement and change take place entirely in the divine world. Maybe one should take that seriously and see a mythological playing out or enactment of what has happened in the history of religions. Though there is much to this psalm that cannot be explored in our time frame, I want to look at how it goes about defining deity in its complexity and in its essential character. And to begin with the complexity, I am reminded of a statement of ethicist James Luther Adams, who said “We belong to a cosmos that is social.”⁴ That is, the interaction and relationship of the one and the many is not simply an issue in the ethics of the human but belongs to all of reality, including the divine world. And it does not necessarily begin with the Trinity.

Psalm 82

¹God has taken his place in the divine council [“council of El”] in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:

²“How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?

³Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.

⁴Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

⁵They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk around in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

⁶I say, “You are gods, children [sons] of the Most High, all of you;

⁷Nevertheless, you shall die like mortals, and fall like any prince.

⁴ James Luther Adams, “The Love of God,” in *On Being Human Religiously: Selected Essays in Religion and Society*, ed. and introduced by Max Stackhouse (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), 96.

⁸Rise up, O God, judge the earth; for all the nations belong to you!

In Psalm 82, there are at least *four* perspectives discernible on the relationship between God and the gods.

1. The God of Israel, YHWH, or the Lord, is seen at the beginning of the psalm as a member of the divine council, one among the gods. In “the council of El,” that is, the council of the high god, El, executive of the pantheon, well-known from the mythological literature of ancient Ugarit, the Lord, here named or called Elohim—I shall come back to that—takes his stand, that is, rises out of the divine world of which he is understood to be a part and begins to judge the gods (the elohim). That is, the psalm suggests a picture of *YHWH/Elohim as being a part of and coming out of the gods*. We hear echoes of such a perspective outside the Psalter. In the ancestral narratives of Genesis, the high god El is associated with the gods of the ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in Exodus we hear God tell Moses that “I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, God Almighty, but by my name “The Lord (YHWH)” I did not make myself known to them” (Exod. 6:1). It is quite possible, if not likely, that in some fashion YHWH/Adonai is a split off from El. It is not surprising, therefore, that the El names and epithets are appropriated and acceptable in Israel’s religion. That is where YHWH comes from.

2. If, however, as Psalm 82 suggests, the Lord comes out of the world of the gods, it is also the case that YHWH shares with the gods of the nations common functions and responsibilities and in the process of this court scene takes over the divine world and its responsibilities so that what belonged to the gods now becomes solely vested in YHWH, the Lord. The psalm also suggests, therefore—or we may infer—a relationship in which *the gods and their character are in YHWH*. Taking over the divine realm involves appropriating the aspects and responsibilities of all the gods. There is an interesting intimation of this within the language of the psalm. The Tetragrammaton, the divine name YHWH, does not appear anywhere in the psalm, where the divine name is given as *Elohim* (vv. 1, 8), as is the case often in the Old Testament. That feature can be handled literally by observing that Psalm 82 belongs to what is called the Elohist Psalter, a group of psalms that show a preference for the word “elohim” over the Tetragrammaton when referring to the God of Israel (Pss. 42–83). In this particular psalm, however, the Elohim name does more. One becomes aware of the ambiguity of the term, how it can be proper name, “Elohim,” or common noun, “gods,” either singular—referring to the God of Israel, as it does twice in the psalm—or plural, referring to all the other gods, as it also does twice in Psalm 82. By using the word “elohim” in these ways, the psalm reminds us that the term is always

capable of pointing to something more or other. It is a literary way of reminding us that the gods are in YHWH and YHWH is part of the *elohim*.

Confirmation of this absorption of other deities or their characteristics is evident in the Psalms and elsewhere. A classic example is the presentation of the Lord as the storm god in Psalm 29: "The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters" (v. 3). Long ago H. L. Ginsburg argued that this psalm is a Canaanite hymn to Baal, the only change being the replacement of the name "Baal" with the Tetragrammaton, a point that finds its confirmation when the replacement is reversed and the three consonants of the Hebrew name Baal are reinserted.⁵ Then one will find heavy repetition and word play with those three consonants throughout the psalm, clearly suggesting the likelihood that the original divine figure of the psalm was Baal, whose character as the god of the storm has been fully absorbed into YHWH.⁶ But one does not encounter YHWH in the Old Testament as one particular kind of deity, god of storm, mountain deity, personal god, warrior god, etc. There is not a peculiar character to this deity. The possibilities are too numerous, for there are few if any aspects of the cosmos and its rule and governance that are not explicitly associated with YHWH.

3. What is most obvious in the psalm, of course, is the *confrontation and conflict between the Lord, that is, YHWH/Elohim and the gods*, which ends with his condemning them to death as he assumes sole rule, *the Lord against the gods*. While the critical term for "gods" is debatable at the beginning of Psalm 58, it seems to reflect the kind of judicial metaphor for the conflict between God and the gods that we have in Psalm 82. It begins:

Do you indeed decree what is right, you gods?
Do you judge people fairly?
No, in your hearts you devise wrongs;
Your hands deal out violence on earth.

Then the psalm proceeds to describe the actions of the wicked.

The wicked go astray from the womb;
They err from their birth, speaking lies.

⁵ H. L. Ginsburg, *Kitve wgryt* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: The Bialik Foundation, 1936), 129 ff. Cf. Frank M. Cross Jr., "Notes on a Canaanite Psalm in the Old Testament," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 117 (1950): 19 ff.

⁶ Cf. Aloysius Fitzgerald, "Note on Psalm 29," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 215 (1974): 61–63.

They have venom like the venom of a serpent,
Like the deaf adder that stops its ear ...

If the opening reference is to the gods, as seems likely, then we have much the same thing going on in Psalm 58 as in Psalm 82, an indictment of the gods for their failure to stop the wicked from carrying out their evil deeds. We should note in passing that this judicial metaphor is prominent in Deutero-Isaiah as the Lord summons the gods into the courtroom in order to demonstrate their inability to act as gods in declaring and bringing about what is to happen. The outcome is the disappearance of the gods as a delusion (Isa. 41:21–29).

4. The relationship between God and the gods, however, is not finally one of conflict. As Psalm 82 comes to an end, there is at least an implicit claim that *the Lord will rule over the gods of the nations*—“Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations belong to you”—a dominance manifest and reflected in a righteous rule of the earth and attested elsewhere in the psalms, particularly in that climactic group of psalms that declare “the Lord reigns” over all, the Enthronement Psalms of Book IV (Pss. 93 and 95–99). Assertions of the Lord’s reign over the gods are not confined to the Enthronement Psalms, however. As Book III of the Psalter comes to an end in Psalm 89, the question “Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord?” is asked and immediately answered: “God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and awesome above all that are around him.” Such a claim, echoed in Psalm 29, “Ascribe to the Lord, you divine ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,” makes it clear that the gods have been turned into worshippers of the Lord; the occupants of both heaven and earth bow down before the maker of earth.

Psalm 82 suggests to us, therefore, a way of viewing the reality of God that is open to complexity and differentiation, to continuity and discontinuity while also claiming and insisting on unity and order. Nowhere in the rest of scripture do we get so clear a picture of the divine council as a socio political order suggesting complexity in the divine world while also insisting on the one rule of the one God as shaping and directing it. The divine assembly continues to be a significant feature of Israel’s religious conviction and of the scriptures that portray it. So in the creation narratives, divine commands are several times “Let us make...” and “Let us go down and see.” When Isaiah is called, the Lord on the throne, surrounded by the seraphim says: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And in Micaiah’s vision of the heavenly assembly, there is discussion and planning that takes place among the participants (1 Kings 22). The condemnation of the gods to mortality does not mean the end of the complexity of divinity; the cosmos is still social.

DEFINING DEITY

The Living God

Out of this complex and sociopolitical world as one sees it in Psalm 82 come two critical matters in regard to defining and distinguishing the God who takes over from the other gods. One aspect of that distinction is *the difference between the living God and the dying gods*. The mortality of the other gods conjoins with what the Psalms and other texts say about idols and images. The latter have no power. They are, as Psalm 115 and other psalms put it, “the work of human hands ... They have mouths but do not speak; eyes but do not see...” They are powerless. The second aspect is the claim of Psalm 82 and the rest of scripture that God lives. Several things need to be observed about that claim:

1. The notion that God is dead or may be dead is not an invention of modern philosophy or a passé theological movement of the 1960s. It was one of the liveliest issues in the ancient world.

2. The conception of God as living is a part of general characterization of deity in the ancient Near East. The expression we hear in Psalm 18:45, “The Lord lives,” corresponds to the jubilation cry in Ugaritic–Canaanite myth, “Baal lives” after the earlier cry “Baal is dead.” Related to this is language about God sleeping. In a mythological context, God’s resurrection was God’s “awaking.” The psalms take over this kind of language to call for effective power from the Lord. The call to God to awake is frequent in the psalms. So in Psalm 44:23: “Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not cast us off forever.” In two instances, the call to the Lord to awake is in order to bring about justice, for example, Psalm 7:6: “Awake, O my God, you have appointed a judgment [or commanded justice]”; and Psalm 59:5: “Wake up! Bestir yourself for my defense (*mishpat*), for my cause, my God and my Lord.” Sleep is in this context a picture for the attitude of the *Deus absconditis*, of God who is silent and does not intervene, who has not yet evidenced life and power to the oppressed. Because sleep was the time when the divine power was broken and ineffective, the psalmist claims in one of the most beloved of all psalms: “The one who keeps you will not slumber. Behold the one who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121).

3. The language “God lives,” or “the Lord lives,” which we find in Psalm 18:46, occurs most often in the oath “As the Lord lives,” a usage that points to God as witness and judge. It places the most serious matters under the confession and conviction of the living God, that is, the claim that nothing of weight matters

or happens except out of the reality that God is living, dynamic, and capable, effecting everything. It is, in a sense, an acknowledgment of the truth of the mythological claim that when God dies, everything else dies (e.g., Baal's death means the dying of the natural world without water). To say "God lives," or "as God lives," when we say something is also a testimony to the seriousness and truthfulness of what one says, a willingness to place one's words and being under the watchful and powerful presence of a living God, knowing with the author of the Hebrews that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

4. With this notion of the living God, several things are claimed or inferred: a) What is living is more than a memory. The living God means a present reality. b) Whatever is living is not subject to our control. c) Whatever is living makes demands on us. And d) to speak of God as living is to speak of God as involved with the rest of life. Here is where the notion, central to the psalms, of God's responsiveness to the human situation comes in: God's passion and compassion, suffering and pain. The rule and power of God is never broken—it may be hidden. Clearly, as we see in the psalms, Israel wrestled with the problem of *deus absconditus*; that is all through the psalms. But it was for Israel *deus absconditus*, God hidden, not *deus mortuus*, God dead, as it was for Baal—and, according to Psalm 82, for the whole divine world. In the ancient world, gods died and even came back to life. Something rather different, however, happens in Psalm 82. For this is not the story of the death of a god; it is a judgment against the whole divine realm that condemns it to mortality, to death, so that the power and effectiveness of the gods is no longer possible. They are like human beings. The living God has condemned the gods to death. Their power is gone.

Justice for the Poor

Perhaps the most important word of the psalm, however, and the definitive answer it gives to how one defines deity is found in the reason why the gods are condemned to mortality. It is anything but obscure. Indeed the point is underscored by repetitive speech in a way that few texts, ancient or contemporary, demonstrate so clearly. The most obvious of the repeated words is the verb *shaphat*, "to judge, to do justice," occurring four times in the psalm, at the beginning and the end, with regard to the work of the God who takes over in this psalm. That is, God's speech against the gods, Elohim's death sentence pronounced on the gods—"In the midst of the Gods he holds judgment" (v. 1)—is an act of judgment and justice. So also at the end of the psalm, the future work of God and the hope of all the earth is for God to enact justice for and upon all

nations: “Rise up, O God, judge the earth” (v. 8). In marked distinction from this strong identity of Elohîm with the enactment of justice is what we hear about the rest of the gods. Again the word for justice and judgment is used twice, once in Elohîm’s query to the council of the gods, “How long will you judge unjustly?” with its counterpart in the next verse, “Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute (vv. 2–3).”

With these verses we encounter the other large category of repetitive speech: five different terms (with one repeated) for the weak and the poor. It is not possible to differentiate sharply between the terms, as they all have to do with the weak, the needy, and the poor, some of them more precise, as in reference to the orphan. The other terms, however, are all capable of identifying members of the community who are impoverished, weak, and/or needy in some fundamental way, specifically, in need of material and/or legal assistance.

“Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (vv. 2–3).

It is difficult to imagine a more explicit way of defining what is missing in the divine world, what role defines deity in a life or death way. It is the provision of justice for the weak and the poor when what is happening is injustice and preferential treatment for the wicked, the term in the Psalter which, from the first verse onward, is the all-encompassing term to describe the rich and powerful who oppress the weak and the poor. Psalm 1 begins: “Blessed is the one who walks not in the way of the wicked,” and Psalm 82 says this is the fundamental issue on which the world hangs. The rule of the cosmos is oriented toward the wicked, which means injustice toward the weak and the poor. The destiny of the gods, of the rule of the universe, now hangs on this one thing: justice for the poor. There is no catalogue of divine sins, no internal conflict in the divine council. It is all reduced to a single issue. Even when the text goes on to speak of the gods as having “neither knowledge nor understanding,” that is a reference to their maladministration of justice, as we know from Deuteronomy where those who are to be chosen as judges should be persons who are “wise, discerning/understanding, and knowing” (Deut. 1:13).

It is not just the fate of the gods that is at stake. The fate of the universe is at risk in the face of the failures of its rulers to rule justly, as we hear at the end of verse 5: “All the foundations of the earth are shaken.” When justice for the weak does not happen in the divine world, the outcome is literally earth-shaking: world disruption and deity-dying, one an outcome, the other a permanent effect.

Although this psalm is unique and unusual even as it is direct and explicit, I would like to show how it resonates with so much of the rest of the Psalter. To some extent all that happens in the Psalter is accounted for in this psalm. It may not be in any technical, literal, or redactional sense the center of the Psalter, but it is the foundation on which most of it rests. Let me give three examples to illustrate.

First, the largest single group of psalm types is the genre of lament, essentially a prayer for help. It is precisely the outcry of the weak and the poor, the powerless and the needy, who live in a world where the wicked, referred to over eighty times in the psalms, are often shown partiality. The legal codes of the Bible refer to the outcry and God's listening specifically with regard to the orphan and the widow (Exod. 22:21–24) and the poor and needy (Deut. 15:9; 24:14–15). One may and should assume that although we often do not have any clear or specific way of defining the one who prays such a prayer as these lament psalms, the voice is that of the poor, the weak and the needy, the orphan and the widow who cry out for justice, as, for example, at the beginning of Psalm 86: "Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy," and whose voice is heard and answered, as seen, for example, in Psalm 9:12: "He does not forget the cry of the afflicted." Their cry is for justice (Ps. 7:8, "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness"), to be rescued and delivered, to be saved from the oppression of the wicked (Ps. 9:9, "The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed"). What the gods have not done, according to Psalm 82, what Elohim has called for (v. 1) and is called to (v. 8), that is what most of these prayers are about.

Second, and in similar fashion, one of the primary themes of the Psalter, present in both the lament prayers and in the songs of thanksgiving and praise, is that the Lord is the one who will judge and deal justly. From Psalm 7, with its claim that "God is a righteous judge," to Psalm 113, with its depiction of the Lord who "raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap," the justice and compassion of God for the weak and the poor is central to the theology of the Psalter, to its portrayal of the Lord of the psalms. Nowhere is this view of Elohim/YHWH more pronounced than in Psalms 93 through 99, commonly called Enthronement Psalms because of their declaration that the Lord is king, a theme that some have argued provides the theological center of the psalms.⁷ More than any other group, these psalms declare the exaltation of the Lord/Elohim above all the gods: "For the Lord is a great God and a great King above

⁷ James L. Mays, "The Center of the Psalms: 'The LORD Reigns' as Root Metaphor," in James L. Mays, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 12–22.

all gods” (95:3); “For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods” (96:4–5); “all gods bow down before him” (97:9). Elohim’s takeover of the divine world, that glimpse into the divine world that Psalm 82 gives us, is now the presupposition of all the psalms and to which they all bear witness. The Lord is king and the rule of this king is just and compassionate. That is attested from the beginning (Ps. 9:7–8, 16–18) to the end (Ps. 146:7–10) but is especially the climactic declaration of the Psalter in the Enthronement Psalms. There we hear echoes of the last verse of Psalm 82: “Rise up, O judge of the earth.” In the midst of the Enthronement Psalms, the psalmist in Psalm 94 asks: “Who rises up for me against the wicked?” Psalms 96 and 98 conclude and climax with the declaration: “For he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity,” in both cases making this expectancy follow upon the announcement that the Lord is king. Psalm 99 makes the definitive claim, “Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob,” and Psalm 97 reminds us that “righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.” None of this is confined to these psalms, however. So in Psalm 76:8–9 we hear: “From the heavens you uttered judgment; the earth feared and was still when God rose up to establish judgment, to save all the oppressed of the earth.”

Perhaps the climactic echo of Psalm 82 is the word we hear in response to the announcement in Psalm 82:5 that because the gods do not know or understand and walk in darkness, the foundations of the earth are shaken. Now we hear twice, in Psalm 93 and 96, that the Lord is king; he has established the world; *it shall never be shaken*. The endangerment of the universe by the absence of justice in the world is overcome by the just rule of the Lord. The prophets call for justice in the land. The psalms tell us the *world* hangs by that thread, that the godness of God depends upon the execution of justice to deliver the weak and the poor. No wonder the Lord says “my wrath will burn” when the abused widow and orphan “cry out to me” (Exod. 22:24). God’s own reputation, God’s own divinity depends on what happens when that cry goes up.

The third reflection of the new world after Psalm 82 and the reinforcement of its definition of deity is the role of the king as we find it in the royal psalms. The rule of the human king is the preeminent *imitatio dei*. Reflected in broad terms in a psalm such as Psalm 101, which begins, “I will sing of *hesed* and *mishpat*, of steadfast love and justice” and ends with the declaration: “Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land.” The clearest and most explicit presentation of the rule of the king as an imitation of the rule of the deity is Psalm 72. It begins with the call: “Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king’s son. May he judge your people with righteousness, *and your poor*

with justice... May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor." Then the psalm goes on at length with prayers for blessing upon the king: "May he live while the sun endures. May he have dominion from sea to sea. May all kings bow down before him, all nations give him service." Why should such enduring, rich, and universal rule be the outcome for this king? Verse 12 is very explicit about that: "Because he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy." The rationale for all the blessings before and after these verses is the king's just rule in behalf of the poor and the needy. What defines divine rule defines human rule. Furthermore, the prosperity and flourishing of human society depends solely upon this one factor: maintenance of justice to save the weak and the poor.

So it is that in Psalm 82 a significant and unprecedented theological step is taken—the death of all the gods. Its basis is the moral behavior of the human community, more particularly, the presence or absence of justice defined by what happens to the weak, the powerless, the poor members of society, or, one might say, how the systems of order provide for the right of such persons. And that is not simply a matter for the human realm. The very claim to deity rests upon the question of whether or not the gods have carried out such moral supervision, insuring the presence of justice in the human communities for which they are responsible.

The point of the psalm in a sense, that is, by its story or narrative character, is that henceforth Israel is to view the world as directed by a single moral purpose, reflected in the God that it has come to know in its experience. There are not ultimate powers at work in competition with each other or ruling in different spheres. There is only one Lord of the universe, and the claim to be the only one rests upon this God's insistence on a justice-shaped universe. Psalm 82 is a story, literally, of how the divine world was forced into radical change in the face of human injustice and oppression of the poor. On that day the gods died because they did not sustain a world where justice and deliverance for the weak and the needy could be maintained. Christian faith and Judaism have lived ever since with the moral burden of monotheism. It is there in every theodicy issue, and Psalm 82 says God wants to be judged precisely on these grounds, as it concludes: "Rise up, O God, judge the earth." Maybe this *is* the most important text in the Bible. If not, it may be the most disturbing. ■

Lecture

Configuring the Text in Biblical Studies

by Hindy Najman

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I. INTRODUCTION

I begin with a well-known diary entry from Kierkegaard, which I will take the liberty, for the purposes of this paper, of rewriting: “Philosophy is perfectly right in saying that life must be understood backwards. But then one forgets the other clause—that it must be lived forwards.”¹ In order to broaden the point’s significance, I propose to rewrite Kierkegaard’s first sentence as follows: “Historical approaches are perfectly right in saying that life must be understood backwards.” After all, the philosophy Kierkegaard has in mind is the Hegelian variety, which takes a historical approach. There is no reason why the point should be essentially about philosophy. And, in order to apply the point more concretely to a specific historical approach of crucial importance to biblical studies, I propose a second rewriting: “Philology is perfectly right in saying that texts must be understood backwards. But then one forgets the other clause—that texts are both products and constituents of lives lived forwards.” Now I am in a position to raise two pairs of questions. First: Must philology understand texts backwards? Can it not also understand texts forwards, in the process of their formation? Second: Are the lives of which texts are both products and constituents always lived forwards? Can they not, in some way, be lived backwards, in relation to a past that can be remade?

¹ Søren Kierkegaard, *Diary of Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. Peter Rohde, trans. Gerda Anderson (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), 111.

Here I want to sketch a new project that investigates the connections between: 1) the formation of texts, corpora, and discourses; 2) the formation of the concept of the personality to whom these textual units come to be ascribed; and 3) the formation of the personality of the reader of these textual units.

Biblical philology (which has traditionally been understood to mean textual and historical criticism) has sought, for the most part, to understand backwards. It has focused on *reconstructing* and *undoing* the formation of textual units, in search of the authentic original that is assumed to lie buried beneath layers of error and accretion. Meanwhile, ascriptions of biblical and parabiblical texts have been treated mainly as pseudo-historical claims about the origination of these texts, or occasionally as exegesis that is posterior to the existence of the texts. The linkage between ascription and text formation—not to mention the connection between these two and the formation of readers—has been almost entirely neglected in recent work.

However, a brilliant classical philologist anticipated the idea of such a connection in the nineteenth century. His innovation remained without impact for a century and, to this day, its impact on biblical studies remains small. This is something I should like to change. To this end, I will argue, first, that textual formation need not only be understood backwards. It may also be understood forwards. I will then explore the almost forgotten nineteenth-century suggestion that textual formation is connected to the formation of authorial personalities. Finally, I will illustrate the reciprocal dynamic between textual formation and authorial formation, along with its significance for reader formation, by considering two important figures: Moses and Ezra.

PART I: TEXT FORMATION

Current approaches to textual formation in biblical studies remain deeply indebted to major developments that occurred between 1780 and 1850. It is worth noting that in this period, philology crossed boundaries between sacred and secular, and between antiquity and the Middle Ages. What connected biblical and classical studies in particular was the sense that both continued to play central roles in the formation and self-understanding of the modern West. If the Hebrew Bible, along with the New Testament, was the sacred source of religious self-understanding, then the Homeric corpus was nonetheless a secular source of both aesthetic and ethical norms (so much so that it sometimes seemed to give rise to a new paganism, as we see in the case of Goethe). Today these boundaries are treated far too often as impassable. But we *still* have a deep investment

in finding fruitful relations to both biblical and classical pasts, and there is *still* fertile ground for cross-pollination between the disciplines.

The late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century developments in philology that I mentioned above are typically retrospective. They seek to understand texts backwards in a quest for the originals. However, I believe that these developments can be separated from this retrospective orientation. Though a quest for original texts is perfectly legitimate, this is not the only legitimate approach. Just as textual formation is lived forwards, it can also be understood forwards.²

In the late eighteenth century, two scholars, both trained in philology at Göttingen, set out in quest of the original texts underlying the Hebrew Bible (or the Old Testament) and the Homeric corpus. Their quests did not succeed. But they found something else of great importance along the way: the history of the text in antiquity, a history that can be understood not only backwards but also forwards.

Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1753–1827) blazed the trail. Employing an extensive knowledge not only of the Septuagint, but also of rabbinic and masoretic sources, as well as information about the material conditions of writing in antiquity, he reached the pessimistic conclusion that it was impossible to reconstruct the original text: “The compilers of our canon, who brought to their labors neither the inspiration of the Holy Spirit nor the aids of critical skill, have delivered to us not merely the materials they were in possession of, but also the shape of those materials; must not then faults occur in the original exemplar [*Original exemplar*], from which our copies are derived, for which there is no longer any remedy? In short, our critical apparatus where unnecessary is superfluously abundant, and elsewhere poor and remediless where we are in the greatest need of its assistance.”³

Friedrich August Wolf (1759–1824) followed Eichhorn’s lead. In what was intended as a prolegomenon to a new edition of Homer, Wolf used recently published scholia of the Alexandrian grammarians, where Eichhorn had used the rabbinic and masoretic notes. Like Eichhorn—and unlike Villoison, who

² Of course, we must seek this understanding from our own moment in history. So we cannot help the fact that our understanding is to some extent always also backwards, and we must constantly challenge ourselves to overcome the pitfalls of anachronism.

³ Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament*, trans. Christine G. Reeve (London: Spottiswood and Co., 1888), 232. [Einleitung in das Alte Testament, 4th ed.]. Göttingen: Rosenbusch, 1823, 1:383–84.

published the scholia—Wolf reached the pessimistic conclusion that the original text lay beyond our reach.

The pessimism of Eichhorn and Wolf did not, of course, signal the impossibility of understanding textual formation backwards. By 1850, a number of scholars had helped to formulate a new, attainable goal for the reconstruction of ancient texts, along with what came to be called “Lachmann’s method.”⁴ If one could not reach the *Urtext*, one might nevertheless reconstruct what Eichhorn had called the “original exemplar, from which our copies are derived”—what came to be called the *archetype*. Setting aside some technical issues that need not concern us here, we may follow Ronald Hendel in characterizing the archetype as “the earliest inferable textual state.”⁵ Whether there is one such archetype or many is an empirical question depending on the particular case. The crucial point, for my purposes, is that only a relatively late, if still quite ancient archetype was seen to be within reach: the Homer of the Alexandria in the third to second century BCE; the masoretic Hebrew Bible of the early middle ages; the New Testament of the fourth century CE.⁶

In any event, it remains true that textual criticism remains retrospective in orientation: we understand backwards. In Hendel’s words, “A critical text attempts to turn back the hands of time, a nostalgic gesture perhaps, but one that restorers of other works of human hands will recognize.”⁷ *Must* we understand backwards? Is it not also possible to understand the history of textual formation forwards?

One obstacle preventing such a reorientation is the assumption that textual variations are all to be *regretted*. We find this assumption, for example, in the following sentence by Frank Moore Cross: “The sole way to improve a text, to ferret out error, is to trace the history of readings, to determine an archetype which explains or makes transparent the introduction of error or corruption.”⁸ From this perspective, the history of readings is a history of errors and corruptions.

⁴ In fact, as Sebastiano Timpanaro showed, it is questionable whether this is strictly speaking a method, as it hardly renders judgment redundant; and it is in any event not the product of Karl Lachmann alone, or even principally. See Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann’s Method*, trans. and ed. Glenn W. Most (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2005.

⁵ Ronald Hendel, “The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition,” *Vetus Testamentum* 58 (2008): 324–51.

⁶ It is important to note here that textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible has been transformed by the Dead Sea Discoveries. Ronald Hendel and the project of the Oxford Hebrew Bible is not a diplomatic edition based on the Masoretic Text but a critical edition that takes the scrolls findings into account.

⁷ Hendel, “The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition,” 335.

⁸ Frank Moore Cross, “Problems of Method in the Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible,” in *The Critical Study of Sacred Texts*, ed. W. D. O’Flaherty (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1979), 50.

Another assumption that goes with an exclusively retrospective approach is the assumption that there is a sharp and irreversible distinction between textual formation and textual transmission. If this is the case, then we may make an equally sharp and irreversible distinction: between textual criticism, which aims to regress to the point of textual fixation, and the history of interpretation, which seeks to understand forwards, but only—on this view—from the point of textual fixity on.

But we are not *forced* to adopt these two assumptions. To be sure, they seem well suited to cases of medieval manuscript copying. It is perhaps no accident that Jakob Bernays and Karl Lachmann worked out their methods for reconstructing archetypes in relation to manuscripts of Lucretian poetry. But it is not at all obvious that the assumptions in question are compulsory when it comes to the Hebrew Bible or other ancient texts. Thus Hendel agrees with James Kugel and others in seeing some variation as interpretation rather than corruption: “Interpretive phenomena such as harmonizations, explications, linguistic modernizations, and exegetical revisions open a window onto scribal interpretation in the period prior to the textual stabilization of the various biblical books. These types of variants ought not to be seen as mere ‘corruptions’—as is the older text-critical nomenclature—but rather as evidence of the process of scripturalization, i.e., the conceptual shifts by which texts became Scripture.”⁹ Hendel retains a distinction between textual formation and textual transmission. But Hendel does not see the distinction as sharp and irreversible. Instead, he sees “a historical transition from major to minor textual intervention, rather than a change from all to none.”¹⁰ He also regards this transition as reversible: “Some scribes became major partners once again, when the changes were so thoroughgoing as to create a new edition. In these cases, new textual production occurs after the period of textual transmission has begun.”¹¹

In my view, once we abandon the assumptions that make a retrospective approach compulsory, we should stop thinking in terms of *compositional processes* that culminate in the production of *fixed texts*. Instead, we should think in terms of what I call *traditionary processes* that encompass both textual formation and textual interpretation, as well as a variety of text-involving practices, individual and communal. From these traditionary processes, texts of more or less fixity sometimes precipitate out, just as in chemistry separable solids sometimes form within a medium that remains liquid. Once we think in

⁹ Hendel, “The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition,” 327.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

terms of traditionary processes, we are free to understand them either backwards or forwards. We may take a retrospective approach, seeking to reconstruct an archetypal text or family of texts, and this is a very valuable pursuit. Or, we may take a prospective approach, studying the interpretive, religious, and cultural developments that precede, succeed, and intervene in the formation of texts.

PART II: AUTHOR FORMATION

Far less well known than the story of the development of the historiography of the text, which has been told by Sebastiano Timpanaro¹² and Anthony Grafton¹³ among others, is the story of a further nineteenth century development, initiated in 1869—some 80 years after Eichhorn’s groundbreaking work—by a twenty-four year old who, in a highly unusual step, had been appointed to a professorship in classical philology at the University of Basel. This precocious youth was none other than Friedrich Nietzsche.

If Eichhorn and Wolf, along with Bernays and Lachmann, crystallized the idea of understanding the formation of the text backwards, then Nietzsche articulated the idea of understanding the formation of the *author* and, indeed, of understanding this formation *forwards*. Only a century later, in 1969, would this idea begin to become more widely appreciated, thanks to Michel Foucault.

For his inaugural lecture at Basel, Nietzsche chose as his topic “The Homeric Question.” This was understood—and is still understood by many scholars—to comprise two questions: 1) How are we to identify and reconstruct the original Homeric text? 2) How are we to identify and contextualize Homer himself, the original author?¹⁴

Bernays and Lachmann may have arrived at a practical response to the pessimism of Eichhorn and Wolf with respect to the question of the *Urtext*. But this did nothing whatsoever for the question of the *Urschriftsteller*. Here, Nietzsche took the decisive step, though he was derided for it at the time, by asking: “Was the person created out of a concept, or the concept out of a person? This

¹² Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann’s Method*.

¹³ Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and James E. G. Zetzel, *F. A. Wolf: Prolegomena to Homer, 1795: Translated with Introduction and Notes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹⁴ The combined quest for both original text, *Urtext*, and original writer, *Urschriftsteller*, is of course found in biblical studies too, hence the search for the *ipsissima verba* of the Jeremiah or Isaiah.

is the real ‘Homeric question,’ the central problem of personality.”¹⁵ Nietzsche proceeded to suggest three stages in the development of both the Homeric collection and the Homeric personality. What interests me here is not whether Nietzsche is correct. Of course, the details are still hotly contested by Homer scholars, who tend to ignore Nietzsche in any event. What interests me is the sort of story Nietzsche tells—the way he links textual and authorial formation—and ultimately whether this sort of story can be told in biblical studies.

In specifying the three stages, Nietzsche went backwards in time. His ultimate point, however, is to vindicate a *prospective* approach.¹⁶ The first stage in Nietzsche’s discussion is, then, the latest, chronologically speaking. At this stage, “The Alexandrian grammarians [e.g., Zenodotus of Ephesus in the third century BCE and Aristarchus in the second] ... conceived the Iliad and the Odyssey as the creations of one single Homer; they declared it to be psychologically possible for two such different works to have sprung from the brain of one genius ... in contradiction to the Chorizontes [attributing the two works to different authors], who represented the extreme limit of the skepticism of a few detached individuals of antiquity rather than antiquity itself considered as a whole.”¹⁷ Here the textual unity of the collection went together with the unity of the author’s personality: “To explain the different general impression of the two books on the assumption that one poet composed them both, scholars sought assistance by referring to the seasons of the poet’s life, and compared the poet of the Odyssey to the setting sun.”¹⁸ This assumption of a unitary collection along with a unitary authorial personality lasted, Nietzsche thinks, until his own day: “the personality of Homer is treated seriously; that a certain standard of inner harmony is everywhere presupposed in the manifestations of the personality; and that, with these two excellent auxiliary hypotheses, whatever is seen to be below this standard and opposed to this inner harmony is at once swept aside as un-Homeric. ... Individuality is ever more strongly felt and accentuated; the psychological possibility of a single Homer is ever more forcibly demanded.”¹⁹ Only Wolf, Nietzsche thinks, opened up the possibility of a different view, but he did not explore this other possibility.

¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, “Homer and Classical Philology” (inaugural lecture, Basel University, May 28, 1869). Published in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. John McFarland Kennedy (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1910), 3:155.

¹⁶ Three stages in the formation of Homeric text and author, according to Nietzsche, “Homer and Classical Philology,” in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 3:145–70.

¹⁷ Nietzsche, “Homer and Classical Philology,” in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 3:152–53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

If we go back before the Alexandrian grammarians to a second stage, however, we do not find—or so Nietzsche argues—the same emphasis on Homeric personality. Instead, we find, as we go back before the Alexandrian conquest to Aristotle and his predecessors in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE, that “the inability to create a personality is seen to increase; more and more poems are attributed to Homer; and every period lets us see its degree of criticism by how much and what it considers to be Homeric. In this backward examination, we instinctively feel that away beyond Herodotus [in the fifth century BCE] there lies a period in which an immense flood of great epics has been identified with the name of Homer.”

And if we go still further back to a third stage, before the time of Pisistratus (the mid-sixth century BCE Athenian tyrant, sometimes said to be responsible for a “recension” of Homeric poems), then we find according to Nietzsche that, at this earliest stage, “Homer” was a name attached, not to a personality, but rather to a *genre* or to an *epic tendency*:

The only path which leads back beyond the time of Pisistratus and helps us to elucidate the meaning of the name Homer, takes its way on the one hand through the reports which have reached us concerning Homer’s birthplace: from which we see that, although his name is always associated with heroic epic poems, he is on the other hand no more referred to as the composer of the Iliad and the Odyssey than as the author of the Thebais or any other cyclical epic. On the other hand, again, an old tradition tells of the contest between Homer and Hesiod, which proves that when these two names were mentioned people instinctively thought of two epic tendencies, the heroic and the didactic; and that the signification of the name “Homer” was included in the material category and not in the formal.²⁰

In other words, the ancient Alexandrian grammarians had assumed that there had been an actual poet called Homer, and that on the basis of his personality, a concept of the poet had been formed. This assumption was still dominant in Nietzsche’s own day. As in the case of the text, the philologist’s goal—attainable or not—was to strip away the representational layers, until the original person, existing at a particular time in a particular place, was exposed.

However, if we suspend the assumption that personality came first, and if we look at the textual evidence, then we find according to Nietzsche that, prior

²⁰ Ibid., 155.

to the Alexandrian grammarians, there was very little conception of Homer's personality, and many texts were associated with his name. At the earliest discernible stage, it would seem that all heroic epics were ascribed to Homer, and all didactic epics to Hesiod. So, Nietzsche suggests, what came first was not the personality but rather the concept and in particular, the concept of a certain genre. In the first place, the name of Homer stood, not for a concrete person, but rather for the heroic epic. To ascribe a work to Homer was to say that it was a heroic, rather than a didactic epic. Later, however, some of these texts were excluded, since they were not of the highest quality, and they were imperfect instances of the genre. Only gradually, as some of the higher-quality texts came to be read as a unit and at least partially harmonized, did the name of Homer come to stand for an author who had, in representation, a distinct personality. This personality both reflected the unity of the texts in question, and also served as an idea guiding further harmonization and, perhaps, further text production. Ultimately, this gave rise to a text collection and, at some point, to an ancient edition of this collection.

Nietzsche concluded: "We believe in a great poet as the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—but not that Homer was this poet. ... And the wonderful genius to whom we owe the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* belongs to this thankful posterity: he, too, sacrificed his name on the altar of the primeval father of the Homeric epic, Homeros."²¹ In other words, the great poet and wonderful genius deserving of study is not the actual, historical Homer, assuming that there was such a person. Even if we could find this original Homer, contextualizing him would shed little light on Homeric texts.²²

Nietzsche did not last long in the academy. The reaction to his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, was vicious. To some extent, one can already see the seeds of this disaster in some of the more provocative aspects of Nietzsche's inaugural

²¹ Ibid., 156.

²² For a somewhat similar view, see Gregory Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 110–11: "The comparative evidence of living oral epic traditions goes a long way to show that unity or integrity results from the dynamic interaction of composition, performance, and diffusion in the making of epic. Such evidence, added to the internal evidence of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as texts, points to an evolutionary process in the making of Homeric poetry. And yet, this envisioning of Homer in evolutionary terms may leave some of us with a sense of aching emptiness. It is as if we had suddenly lost a cherished author whom we could always admire for the ultimate achievement of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. But surely what we have really admired all along is not the author, about whom we never did really know anything historically, but the Homeric poems themselves. To this extent, the evolutionary model may even become a source of consolation: we may have lost a historical author whom we never knew anyway, but we have recovered in the process a mythical author who is more than just an author: he is a cultural hero of Hellenism, a most cherished teacher of all Hellenes, who will come back to life with every new performance of his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*."

lecture.²³ One unnecessarily provocative feature of Nietzsche's argument is his statement that the prospective investigation of authorial formation responds to "the *real* 'Homeric question.'" On my view, both questions about textual formation and questions about authorial formation, as well as both retrospective and prospective approaches to these questions, are equally legitimate. My intention is not to repudiate the retrospective quest for *Urtext* and *Urschriftsteller*, or for multiple versions of these. If we could find the original Homer and his compositions, this would be extremely interesting, even if it would shed little light on Homeric texts, most of whose formation is connected to a concept of the personality (i.e., the author) with hardly any connection to the historical figure. Rather, my intention is to endorse the importance of the retrospective search for the original text and writer, while arguing at the same time for a prospective examination of traditionary processes in which both textual units and concepts of personalities are produced, redacted, and revised.

Nietzsche's inaugural lecture suggests four questions that I want to ask of biblical studies: First, what role is played by ascription in the formation of textual units? Second, to what extent and in what ways does textual formation go hand in hand with formation of a distinctive authorial personality? Third, to what extent and in what ways is the relationship between textual formation and authorial formation reciprocal? (So, e.g., may the authorial personality be affected by the production of further texts?) Fourth, what roles can textual and authorial formation play in the formation of the reader?

PART III: MOSES AND EZRA AS METAPHOR AND SIMILE

To explore these questions, I want to compare two figures—Moses and Ezra—and the texts associated with them. The comparison is especially apt because they are both founding figures. Moses is the founder of the people of Israel constituted by means of the exodus from Egypt, the years of wandering in the wilderness, and the revelation at Sinai. Ezra is the founder of the reconstituted Second Temple community and is returned to the land of Israel from the Babylonian exile.²⁴ I will argue, however, that there are significant differences between the ways in which Moses and Ezra are handled by traditionary processes in

²³ Nietzsche argued that philology included at least as much aesthetic subjectivity as objective science, and called for philology to become philosophy, none of which went over well with his colleagues.

²⁴ *Tosefta Sanhedrin* 4:7 compares them in stature: "Rabbi Yossi said: Ezra was sufficiently worthy (ra'uy) that the Torah could have been given through him, had Moses not preceded him."

ancient Judaism, and these differences help us to pursue the four questions for biblical studies suggested by Nietzsche's early work in classics.

Before proceeding to examples, I need to make two preliminary remarks. The first concerns distinct levels of unity that are achievable by means of textual formation. In my first book, *Seconding Sinai*, I focused on the formation of what I called "a discourse tied to a founder," developing an idea of Foucault's, but without yet knowing of Nietzschean roots of the idea. In particular, I focused on Mosaic discourse. Now I want to distinguish two further levels of textual formation, establishing a threefold distinction between text, collection, and discourse.

As I use the terms, a *text* is a unit that may be ascribed to a personality or a figure. A *collection* is a group of texts that may be ascribed to a single figure collectively, or as a group, such as the book of Psalms, 11QPsalms, or the Pentateuch. A *discourse* is a group of texts that may be ascribed to a single figure individually but not collectively, for example, Deuteronomy and Jubilees are part of the same Mosaic discourse²⁵ but not of the same collection. So too Ezra-Nehemiah and 4Ezra are part of the same discourse but not of the same collection.

My second preliminary remark concerns the difference between the two ways in which both writers and readers can relate to exemplary personalities: imitation and emulation. The distinction is related to the distinction between simile and metaphor. A simile compares two terms in some determinate respect by affirming that one is *like* the other in that respect. In contrast, a metaphor compares two terms by affirming that one *is* the other, which establishes an indeterminate identification, pregnant with possibility. If Romeo had said that, "Juliet is like the sun," he would have employed a simile to establish that, like the sun, Juliet is, let us say, the radiant center of his world. But Romeo does not employ a simile. Instead, Romeo speaks metaphorically, saying, "Juliet is the sun." There are indefinitely many things to say about the sun. Perhaps not all of them may be said of Juliet. After all, the identification is not literal. But any of them may be said of Juliet if it turns out to be apt.²⁶

²⁵ Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003); see in particular chap. 1, "Mosaic Discourse," 1–40.

²⁶ See Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 78–79. Also see later discussion in David Hills, "Aptness and Truth in Verbal Metaphor," *Philosophical Topics* 25 (1997): 117–53; Hindy Najman, *Past Renewals: Interpretive Authority, Renewed Revelation and the Quest for Perfection*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2010); see in particular chap. 13 "How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha: Imitation and Emulation in 4Ezra," 235–43.

Similarly, a figure may be exemplary in two different ways. The figure may serve as a simile. In that case, someone may imitate the figure in question: they may be like the figure in some determinate respect. Alternatively, the exemplary figure may serve as a metaphor. In that case, someone may emulate the figure in question: they may *identify* with the figure in an indeterminate way that is pregnant with possibility.

With these preliminaries in place, I will argue for the following two differences between Moses and Ezra. First, traditionary processes gave rise, not only to Mosaic texts and to a Mosaic discourse, but also to a Mosaic collection. In contrast, there are Ezrean texts and an Ezrean discourse, but there is no Ezrean collection—with one notable exception. Second, the name “Ezra” goes from signifying a role to signifying a richly imagined personality, fit both for emulation and imitation. In contrast, the name “Moses” goes from signifying a personality to signifying a role, fit for emulation, but not for imitation—with one notable exception. This contrast has major implications not only for ancient Jewish writers, but also for readers of the texts they produced.

A) First Difference

In various pentateuchal sources, we see aspects of Moses’ personality that make him suitable for a leadership role. He risks his life of privilege to punish the oppressor of an Israelite slave. But this is not merely tribal loyalty. For he also defends the daughters of the priest of Midian against those who would deny them access to the well. In fulfilment of his leadership potential, Moses becomes God’s spokesperson to Israel, and Israel’s spokesperson to God.

However, Moses’ role as protagonist comes to be eclipsed by his role as spokesperson. The highest authority attaches to “Torah of Moses.” This happens to such an extent that Moses becomes an authorial figure, so that texts are now expressions of his spokesperson role. Deuteronomy does not begin with the familiar formula, “And God spoke to Moses saying.” Instead, Deuteronomy begins with, “And these are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel.” In Jubilees, this move from protagonist to author is extended to those parts of what we now call the Pentateuch that narratively precede Moses’ birth.²⁷

²⁷ Translation from James VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 2 vols., *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 510–11, *Scriptores Aethiopici* 87–88 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989).

Prologue:

These are the words regarding the divisions of the times of the law and of the testimony, of the events of the years, of the weeks of their jubilees throughout all the years of eternity as he related (them) to Moses on Mt. Sinai when he went up to receive the stone tablets—the law and the commandments—on the Lord’s orders as he had told him that he should come up to the summit of the mountain.

1:27:

Then he said to an angel of the presence: “Dictate to Moses (starting) from the beginning of the creation until the time when my temple is built among them throughout the ages of eternity.”

Jubilees then proceeds to “rewrite” Genesis through part of Exodus, emphasizing repeatedly that everything written—including, of course, the calendrical issues about which Jubilees cares so much, and which appear to be a point of significant disagreement with the Temple establishment—is dictated to Moses on Sinai, and transcribed by Moses.

Similarly, Philo of Alexandria regards Moses as the lawgiver, not only insofar as the law was given through him at Sinai, but also insofar as he is responsible for the entire Pentateuch, including the parts prior to the narrative of his own birth. Thus, for example, Philo writes:

He [Moses] did not, like any prose-writer, make it his business to leave behind for posterity records of ancient deeds for the pleasant but unimproving entertainment which they give; but, in relating the history of early times, and going for its beginning right to the creation of the universe, he wished to show two most essential things: first that the Father and Maker of the world was in the truest sense also its Law-giver, secondly that he who would observe the laws gladly welcomes conformity with nature and lives in accordance with the ordering of the universe, so that his deeds are attuned to harmony with his words and his words with his deeds (Philo, *Life of Moses*, 2.48).²⁸

²⁸ Translation of Philo’s works are from Loeb Classical Library, vol. VI, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker (London: William Heniemann Ltd.).

Thus, Moses ultimately became not only the protagonist and prophet, and not only the authorial figure to whom texts were ascribed—indeed, not only the founding figure of an entire Mosaic discourse—but also the authorial figure to whom two crucial collections were ascribed: Deuteronomy and the Pentateuch. Textual formation, at various levels, in its essence involved ascription.

Ezra too begins as a protagonist in Ezra-Nehemiah, and becomes an authorial figure to whom texts such as 4Ezra are ascribed: “In the thirtieth year of the destruction of our country, I, Shealtiel, who is Ezra, was in Babylon.”²⁹ Because texts ascribed to Ezra continued to be produced for some time, one might also speak of a discourse of Ezra, comparable to Mosaic discourse.³⁰ But there is no collection ascribed to Ezra, no parallel to the Mosaic Deuteronomy and Pentateuch. However, in 4Ezra, we encounter what appears to be an imagined Ezrean collection on the model of the Mosaic collection. See 4Ezra where Ezra receives the ninety-four books: “Ninety-four books were written by them in forty days and it was that when the forty days were completed the Most High spoke to me and said to me these twenty-four books that were written before me place in public and they will read in them those who are worthy and those who are unworthy of the people but these seventy you are going to keep and you will complete them for the wise of your people” (14:44–46).

If these books ever existed, then they have long been lost. And if this is an attempt to establish Ezra, not merely as a restorer of *torat moshe*, but as the institutor of a *torat ezra*, then it would seem to have been a failure. The absence of an Ezrean collection leaves the authority of Moses without parallel. Perhaps, as Rabbi Yossi said, Ezra was fit to transmit the Torah. But, after all, Moses did precede him, and Ezra did not displace him.

B) Second Difference

In Ezra-Nehemiah, Ezra is a protagonist, introduced as “a scribe expert in the Teaching of Moses” (Ezra 7:6). His personality is not portrayed in much detail. What matters is his role. Doubly authorized by his knowledge of *Torat Moshe* and by the king of Persia, he undertakes to re-establish the Temple cult and to purify the people of intermarriage.

²⁹ 4Ezra 1:1.

³⁰ This would require a specification of the features required for membership in Ezrean discourse. I hope to do this elsewhere.

However, in 4Ezra, Ezra's personality is richly imagined. The portrayal employs two distinct devices. First, there are several similes, which serve to establish that Ezra is like an authoritative figure in some determinate respect. Here is an explicit comparison to Daniel with respect to visionary power and content: (10) This is the interpretation of the vision that you saw: (11) the eagle you saw who came up from the sea—this is the fourth kingdom that was shown in a vision unto your brother Daniel. (12) But it was not interpreted to him as I am interpreting to you now. (13) Look! The days are coming when a kingdom will arise upon the earth and it will be more fearful than all the kingdoms that were before it (4Ezra 12:10–13).

Ezra is also explicitly likened to Moses, to whom was shown the burning bush, symbolizing Israel's survival in extreme adversity:

(3) Then he (God) said to me, "I revealed myself in a bush and spoke to Moses when my people were in bondage in Egypt; (4) and I sent him and led my people out of Egypt; and I led him up to Mount Sinai. And I kept him with me many days; (5) and I told him many wondrous things, and showed him the secrets of the times and declared to him the end of the times. Then I commanded him, saying: (6) 'These words you shall publish openly, and these you shall keep secret.' (7) And now I say to you: (8) Lay up in your heart the signs that I have shown you, the dreams that you have seen and the interpretation that you have heard; (9) for you shall be taken up from among men, and henceforth you shall be with my servant and with those who are like you, until the times are ended (4Ezra 14:3–9).

In other passages, the simile is implicit, working by means of textual allusion. Thus Ezra is likened to Ezekiel, in his ability to receive revelation in exile; and to Jeremiah, in his ability to lament destruction. In all these respects, the eponymous author of 4Ezra imitates these figures and inherits their authority. But this is not all. In the culminating passage cited above, Ezra does not merely imitate Moses; he emulates him, receiving the books of the law after forty days. This is not merely a simile. It is an identification: Ezra is the new Moses, though, as I said before, this move appears to have been unsuccessful.

The historical development of Ezra is to some extent the reverse of the development of Moses. If Ezra ceased to be a role and became a personality, then Moses ceased to be a personality and became a role—the role of the lawgiver par excellence. An important step in this direction was taken in Deuteronomy 34, which portrays Moses' death on the threshold of the promised land: "Since then, no

prophet has risen in Israel like Moses. ..." The incomparability of Moses is akin to the incomparability of God. It signifies a pre-eminent authority.

If no prophet was "like Moses," then similes that likened prophets to Moses were highly problematic, although we have seen, in the case of 4Ezra, that they were nevertheless attempted. By the same token, determinate features of Moses' personality became less important than his role as lawgiver. There was no further need to establish Moses' authority, since it was axiomatic. And it was largely inappropriate to establish Moses as an exemplar for imitation, because to imitate Moses would be to appear to challenge his authority.

However, this did not mean that it was impossible to emulate Moses. Indeed, this was exactly what the anonymous writers of Deuteronomy and Jubilees did. They effaced their own names and personalities and, through their pseudepigraphy, they identified with the Mosaic role of lawgiver. Moses was incomparable. But this incomparability was asserted in a book that repeated the giving of the law, hence the name: Deuteronomy. So Mosaic lawgiving was established in Deuteronomy as at once both incomparable and repeatable.

This is not to say that the emulation and repetition of Mosaic lawgiving was easy to accomplish. In my book, *Seconding Sinai*, I established specific features that texts needed to exhibit in order to count as participating in Mosaic discourse. Ascription to Moses was necessary but far from sufficient. If Deuteronomy was accepted by all communities then Jubilees was not, although it employed elaborate Deuteronomic strategies and seems to have been treated as scripture at Qumran. However, even much later, in the classical rabbinic and medieval periods when Deuteronomic pseudepigraphy would seem to have been unthinkable, we hear echoes of the emulation of Moses. Laws with great authority but with no scriptural source were sometimes called *halakhah lemoshe missinai*.³¹ And Maimonides, in an extremely audacious move, called his code *Mishneh Torah*.

So far, I have spoken of the writer's imitation and emulation of exemplary figures such as Moses and Ezra. But what of the reader? In 4Ezra, it is clear that the reader is supposed to emulate Ezra. Not all ancient Jewish readers were graced with visions and with angelic instruction. So they could hardly be asked to imitate Ezra in the way that he imitates Daniel, among others. However, the lesson that Ezra learns from visions and angels was one that all ancient Jewish readers could be asked to learn with him. 4Ezra was written after the destruc-

³¹ Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, where there is an extensive discussion of *halakhah lemoshe missinai*.

tion of the Second Temple. But it portrays Ezra's response to the destruction of the First. This is a mode of consolation: what has not yet been built cannot have been destroyed.³² What distinguishes such consolation from delusion is the long-standing sense, found throughout the Second Temple period, that the Second Temple never was the restoration of the First.

Ezra is portrayed as a personality paralyzed by loss. Only after the fourth of his seven visions, when he learns how to lament, is Ezra transformed into a figure worthy of receiving the books of the law. He is said explicitly to be turned around by his encounter with a mourning mother who turns out to be none other than Zion herself. The reader who allows himself or herself to mourn the loss of Zion and the Temple—who thereby succeeds in finding hope in the wake of destruction—will have emulated Ezra.

What of Moses? I have said that he became inimitable but that writers could seek, with great difficulty and with no guarantee of success, to emulate his law-giving. But ordinary readers could hardly be expected or intended to take on this leadership role *par excellence*.

Nevertheless, there is one exception known to me. Perhaps it is the exception that proves the rule. Philo of Alexandria gave a richly imagined account of Moses' personality and his fitness for leadership, no doubt because he felt the need to establish Mosaic authority in the eyes of Hellenized Jews and, indeed, in the eyes of non-Jewish Greek-speakers. But Philo also noticed the incomparability that Deuteronomy ascribes to Moses at the moment of his death, and he connected this with Moses' movement, which I have thematized already, beyond a personality with traits that could be imitated. Philo dealt with this movement beyond personality by means of his Platonism. On his account, Moses achieved the ultimate goal of human life: a transcendence of determinate personality that rendered him "pure mind":

Afterwards the time came when he had to make his pilgrimage from earth to heaven, and leave this mortal life for immortality, summoned thither by the Father Who resolved his twofold nature of soul and body into a single unity, transforming his whole being into mind, pure as the sunlight. Then, indeed, we find him possessed by the spirit, no longer uttering general truths to the whole nation but prophesying to

³² Najman, "How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha? Imitation and Emulation in 4Ezra," in *Past Renewals: Interpretive Authority, Renewed Revelation, and the Quest for Perfection in Jewish Antiquity*, Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 235–42 (238).

each tribe in particular the things which were to be, and hereafter must come to pass. Some of these have already taken place, others are still looked for, since confidence in the future is assured by fulfillment in the past (Philo, *Life of Moses*, 2:288).

In this respect, Moses could and should be emulated by every reader:

What more shall I say? Has he not also enjoyed an even greater communion with the Father and Creator of the universe, being thought unworthy of being called by the same appellation? For he also was called the god and king of the whole nation, and he is said to have entered into the darkness where God was; that is to say, into the invisible, and shapeless, and incorporeal world, the essence, which is the model of all existing things, where he beheld things invisible to mortal nature; for, having brought himself and his own life into the middle, as an excellently wrought picture, he established himself as a most beautiful and Godlike work, to be a model for all those who were inclined to imitate him. Happy are those who imprint it, or strive to imprint, that image [of Moses] in their souls. For it were best that the mind should carry the form of virtue in perfection, but, failing this, let it at least have the unflinching desire to possess that form (Philo, *Life of Moses*, 1:158–59).

Only because of his Platonic emphasis on the soul's transcendence of the body could Philo maintain that every reader should emulate Moses. Such Platonic views would return in medieval Jewish philosophy. But they do not seem characteristic of classical rabbinic literature, and Moses is therefore treated primarily as an incomparable authority and not as an exemplar to be emulated.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I return to the four questions suggested for biblical studies by Nietzsche's inaugural lecture. 1) Textual ascription can indeed, sometimes, play a crucial role in textual formation. Certainly this is true at the levels of discourse and collection. Whether it is true at the level of smaller textual units, such as sources, remains to be seen. Comparison with other ancient textual units, such as the Homeric books, may prove to be fruitful once again. 2) Ascription is sometimes to a personality. In these cases, textual formation and authorial formation go hand in hand. But ascription is sometimes to a role. As we have seen, there is variation and development: the name "Moses" ceased to signify a personality

and came to signify a role, while the name “Ezra” ceased to signify a role and came to signify a personality. 3) It is not only that authorial formation can affect textual formation by establishing the need for harmonization. Textual formation can also affect authorial formation. In the case of Jubilees, the perceived need to continue Mosaic discourse generated the “rewriting” of much of the Pentateuch. In the case of 4Ezra, the perceived need to continue an Ezrean discourse after the destruction of the Second Temple generated the “rewriting” of Ezra as a richly imagined personality. 4) Finally, one purpose of textual ascription may be to bring about the imitation or emulation of an exemplary figure by the reader, as we see in the case of Ezra. However, as we see in the case of Moses, the more authoritative and incomparable the figure, the more difficult it is to hold this figure up for imitation and even emulation.

We understand backwards but live forwards. So, in effect, says the passage from Kierkegaard with which this essay began. However, I hope to have shown that it is also possible to understand forwards. The pursuit of original texts and their authors is important, but it is by no means the only path in biblical studies. At the same time, I hope that I have also shown that texts themselves sometimes live backwards and forwards at the same time. The complex, dynamic, and reciprocal relationships between the formations of text, author, and reader that characterize ancient Judaism are, to be sure, directed towards the present and future interpretive communities. They achieve this direction through a profound engagement with a past that is never settled.³³ ■

³³ Many thanks to Paul Franks, Ron Hendel, Nicole Hilton, Sol Goldberg, and Julia Lauwers for their incisive comments and editorial suggestions.

Lecture

Between Englishness and Ethiopianism: Making Space at Princeton for Intercultural Theology

by Richard Fox Young

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A seminary has got to be and continually become, over and over, a home, a welcoming environment, a place where faith is cultivated, relationally, in the context of faithful relationships. Jonathan Sacks, a British rabbi, reminds us of a simple but important truth when he speaks of “home” as a place that we make *together*.¹ “Home,” though, can mean a lot of different things, depending on where one comes from; so does that delightful little adverb “together.” That being so, what I am wondering is how we might imagine a seminary being and becoming a welcoming community, *interculturally*. Biblically, my address is focused on the Ephesians theme (2:11–22) of a new—intercultural (multi-, inter-multi-, or multi-intercultural)—humanity in Christ. Whatever one calls it, our new humanity in Christ entails both a *dissolutio* (breaking down) and an *elevatio* (building up) of human cultural particularities; instead of being abolished or trivialized, they are transformed.² On another occasion, I hope to enter more thoroughly into the question of what an intercultural theology might actually look like; here, I mainly want to argue for its being a necessity, not a luxury, and to claim a space for it in our theological curriculum.

¹ Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (London: Continuum, 2007).

² “Epistemologically, intercultural theology must be multiperspectival. It must look to several cultures for insights and validations.” Peter C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face: Asian American Theology in the Making* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003), 12. Phan’s introduction is germane to the question of naming the kind of theology under discussion here (as inter-, or multi-, or inter-multi-, etc.).

“Talk of God and experience of divine presence,” Scottish theologian George Newlands writes, “is articulated within particular cultures in different ways.”³ The illustration I am going to use comes from a culture within a culture of Christian Europe. Let us go back for a moment to the Elizabethan church of the English Reformation and consider George Aylmer (1520–1594), Lord Bishop of London, whom I chanced upon in my reading a while back. I bring him up because Christian history is not altogether on my side in recognizing theology’s need of being intercultural.

Aylmer is mainly remembered for a spirited defense of Elizabeth’s sovereignty over England against some ill-considered words of John Knox (1514–1572), a pivotal figure of the Scottish Reformation. Known for many well-considered words, uttered some 450 years ago, these were not Knox’s finest. They are found in a book called *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1557). Here, “monstrous” means “unnatural” and refers to women being unfit as women for monarchy. If that blast from Knox’s *Trumpet* sounds off-key in today’s world, it ought to interest you that Aylmer, the Lord Bishop, who defended Elizabeth, basically agreed: women, he wrote, were “flibbertigibbets,” except Elizabeth, who ruled by divine right. Bad as that sounds, it is actually something worse about Aylmer that caught my eye: namely, his privileging of Englishness and his ascription of it to God.⁴

“God,” the Lord Bishop exulted, “*is English*.” Unsurprisingly, Aylmer’s English God was fonder of the English than of the Danes, the French, and the Norwegians, whom he singles out, not to mention the dreaded “Scottes” (Knox and company): “Fall flat on thy face before God and give him thanks seven times a day, that you were born an English man, and not a French peasant, nor an Italian, nor [German]”: “[Germans] eat herbs; and you beef and mutton. [Germans] eat potatoes; and you butter, cheese, and eggs. [Germans] drink common water; and you good ale and beer. [Germans] go home from the market with a salad; and you with good flesh fill your wallet.”⁵

³ George Newlands, *The Transformative Imagination: Rethinking Intercultural Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 7.

⁴ On gender and politics in *The First Blast of the Trumpet*, see chaps. 8 and 9 of Rosalind K. Marshall, *John Knox* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008). From her, I derive my understanding of “monstrous” as “unnatural.”

⁵ My citations come from the original of Aylmer’s unpaginated rejoinder to Knox, *An Har-borowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjectes, against the Late Blowne Blaste, concerning the Government of Wemen* (1559), accessed on EEBO (Early English Books Online). Quotations from Aylmer have had their spellings and pronouns modernized.

Obviously, something has gone terribly wrong here. It all sounds very tribal, culturally confining, and lacking in the generous inclusivity of Ephesians. And this, from a man who had found refuge in Strasbourg, before he was “elevated” to ecclesiastical office, just as Knox had found refuge in Geneva! Still, the last thing we should lull ourselves into thinking is, My! Aren’t we more sophisticated, *interculturally*? Substitute “American” for “English” and do you, or do you not, hear an echo of this same Elizabethan sacralization of nationhood in America today?

For a better example of intercultural theology in the spirit of Ephesians, let us now leap over the centuries from the sixteenth to the twentieth, across the continents from Europe to Africa, and from history to literature. I am now going to introduce a novel called *Ethiopia Unbound*, written in 1911 by a Ghanaian Methodist, Joseph Ephraïm Casely-Hayford (1866–1930), the first West African writer of English fiction and perhaps the best until Chinua Achebe of Nigeria.⁶ To understand the title, it helps to know that Casely-Hayford was an advocate of Christianity’s Africanization; or, I should say, of its *re*-Africanization. Inspired by Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832–1912), the Liberian founder of Pan-Africanism, Casely-Hayford believed that Christianity was African in origin and essence. As an ancient center of Christian faith, Ethiopia figured as a symbol for Pan-Africanists who believed that decolonization was indispensable to Christianity’s becoming African again. Think of Ethiopianism as an early instance of African Christian theology.⁷ Now follows an extraordinary passage from the novel, which has the text from Ephesians inscribed at its beginning:

In late Victorian England, two young men walk down London’s Tottenham Court Road. Kwamankra comes from the Gold Coast (as Ghana used to be called by Europeans) and studies law; the other, from England itself, is Silas Whitely, Bishop Aylmer’s modern-day avatar. As one might suspect from his name, Whitely is not a person of color. A student of theology, Whitely harbors doubts about Jesus Christ’s divinity but is about to be ordained into the Anglican priesthood anyway. Kwamankra, who is not a Christian but an African traditional religionist, finds it hard to understand why Whitely has so much trouble believing in Jesus’ divinity.

⁶ J. E. Casely-Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1969 [1911]). For background on Casely-Hayford, see Donald R. Wehrs, *Pre-Colonial Africa in Colonial African Narratives: From Ethiopia Unbound to Things Fall Apart, 1911–1958* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

⁷ For an overview, see Jehu Hanciles, “Ethiopianism: Rough Diamond of African Christianity,” *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae* 23/1-2 (1997): 75-104.

At his flat on Russell Square, Kwamankra tries out a bit of intercultural theology to help Whitely resolve his doubts. Whitely's problems all go back, he says, to "the feebleness of the idea of God in the Anglo-Saxon language." Then, taking a dictionary of Fanti off the shelf, Kwamankra turns to the letter 'N' and begins to tell Whitely about one of the many names of God in his mother tongue: "It is a big word, so big that you can hardly imagine it: "Nyiakropon" [*Nyankopon*], *He who alone is great*. Lest Whitely think that Fanti has only one such word for "God," Kwamankra treats him to another, "Nyami" [*Nyame*],

He who is I am. He then cites a Fanti proverb:

Wana so onyi Nyami se?

*Dasayi wo ho inde, okina na onyi,
Nyami firi tsitsi kaisi odumankuma.*

Translation:

Who says he is equal with God?

*Man is to-day, tomorrow he is not,
I am is from eternity to eternity.⁸*

Unaccustomed to thinking of God by any other word or name, Whitely labors under a disadvantage in this exchange. And when Kwamankra poses a what-if kind of question, the cultural-boundedness of Whitely's theological training becomes painfully evident:

[Kwamankra] "Supposing Jesus Christ had been born of an Ethiopian woman instead of Mary of the line of David, do you think it would have made any difference in the way he influenced mankind?"

[Whitely] "What a strange question . . . Whatever put such an idea into your head?"

[Kwamankra] "Yes, it is strange . . . But, tell me, what is there extraordinary in the idea?"

⁸ On the use of such names in West African Christianity (*Ngewo* among the Mende, *Olorun* among the Yoruba, *Chukwu* among the Igbo, etc.), see Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 94–97.

[Whitely] “Oh, I don’t know. Habits of thought, convention, and all that sort of thing, I suppose.”

Despite the help Kwamankra gives him, Whitely’s doubts remain unresolved after his ordination and he winds up on the Gold Coast, a tragi-comical colonial chaplain preoccupied with one thing in particular, that is, making sure that African and European Christians are buried no less than sixteen feet apart in Accra’s colonial-era cemetery.⁹ How very badly Whitely needed an interlocutor like Kwamankra! Here, I am thinking again of George Newlands and a comment of his that puts into sharp relief what Whitely has missed out on: “Christian faith has always maintained,” he says, “that human language about God reflect[s] in part a response to God’s prior approach and presence to humanity.”¹⁰

Here it would be good to pause and consider how “whiteness” might lie behind Whitely’s intellectual paralysis, his failure to grasp hold of the Johannine, Logopneumatological truth Newlands has in mind. *Ethiopia Unbound*, it goes without saying, is a literary work; realistically, however, the odds were against an exchange like this ever occurring.¹¹ For a possible reason, I turn to Ira Bashkow, whose book *The Meaning of Whitemen* is an ethnographic study of a Papua New Guinean people, the Orokaiva: “It is no historical accident that the “whiteman,” as a perceived cultural presence, is a global phenomenon, and it is thus unsurprising to hear that the *blanco gringo* in Mexico, the *laowai* in China, and the *obroni* in Ghana are all similarly archetypes of western modernity, wealth, and race privilege, personifying the legacy of imperialism, the ideal of development, and the force of globalization.”¹²

Though I suppose that this makes *Ethiopia Unbound* a postcolonial novel that predates postcolonialism as a field of study, it is the window the novel opens up on God that I find most helpful about it. Still, notice how quickly Whitely slams shut the door onto intercultural theology that Kwamankra opens up, if barely a crack. In that door I feel as if my fingers had been caught; I want someone like Kwamankra to be my interlocutor. Many in the global South want us to be theirs but discover to their dismay how very hard it is. Elsa Tamez, a Latina Reformed Church theologian who did her higher studies at a Swiss university, puts it like

⁹ Casely-Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound*, 3-11, 19-21, 26-29, *passim*.

¹⁰ Newlands, *Transformative Imagination*, 34.

¹¹ Cephas N. Omenyo, Mackay Visiting Professor of World Christianity, Princeton Theological Seminary (personal communication, 2007).

¹² Ira Bashkow, *The Meaning of Whitemen: Race and Modernity in the Orokaiva Cultural World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2.

this: the price, she says, of having a decent conversation with the Western theological academy is that you have to play by its rules or not at all.¹³

Making things more fair, theologically, sounds good, but how? One of the ways most worth trying comes right out of *Ethiopia Unbound*. At the end, Casely-Hayford does something very interesting; he shows how even a slight change makes a huge difference by playing a neat historiographical trick, called a “counterfactual” (i.e., if *x* changes, *y* might not occur); counterfactuals work best when the change introduced is minimal without being trivial.¹⁴ For instance, instead of Jesus’s being crucified in Jerusalem, Pilate sends him to Rome, for trial, where our Lord and Savior gets a reprieve from Caesar. That one, though, happens to be about as maximal as they come. Try another: imagine that Switzerland is actually an island in the Caribbean, and instead of being born in Europe, Karl Barth, a Swiss Reformed theologian, was born a Rastafarian. Now who, I wonder, is going to take that seriously? George Newlands, the Scottish theologian, thought that one up (the Rastafarian twist, however, is mine); it seems, though, more than just a little implausible, wouldn’t you say?¹⁵

Supposing Jesus Christ had been born of an Ethiopian woman. ... Only that! This is all that Casely-Hayford asks you to imagine differently. But see how radically changed things are only a few degrees of latitude and longitude away! The counterfactual shift to Africa works like a solvent on the taken-for-grantedness of Christian history; it reinvests that history with a sense of—divine!—contingency, as if it did not necessarily have to be that Aristotle or Kant or Wittgenstein are the only interlocutors one could possibly have. And how differently things might look if instead of Greek or Latin, our theological vocabularies had been shaped by Geez, Ethiopia’s ancient Christian language—or, for that matter, by Fanti, Tamil, or Chinese—instead of our “feeble” English. Casely-Hayford, in short, shows us how we might strip off the corrosion on Christian history of the kind that says a decent conversation about theology cannot be had in any language other than English.

But one thing not at all counterfactual to note is that Christianity *is* African. Casely-Hayford may have been unaware of it back in 1911; even then, however, Christianity’s geographical center of gravity was moving toward Africa, massively. In fact, if you drop a pin onto the center of a Google Map of world

¹³ Elsa Tamez, “Our Struggle as Mestizos.” In *Navigating Romans through Cultures*, ed. Khiok-khng Yeo (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), 168–70.

¹⁴ On counterfactuals, see *Unmaking the West: ‘What-If’ Scenarios that Rewrite World History*, ed. Philip E. Tetlock et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 14–44.

¹⁵ Newlands, *Transformative Imagination*, 22.

Christianity, it would fall on Timbuktu.¹⁶ It is why we have books nowadays with titles like *How God Became African*, by Dutch historian Gerrie ter Haar.¹⁷ Timbuktu, of course, continues to be a great center of Islamic culture; radiating out from there, however, you begin to get today's first and densest populations of Christians, with Rome and Canterbury, New York and Chicago now on the margins of the Christian world. It is not that things that happen here are of marginal significance; *Boundless Faith*, a book by sociologist Robert Wuthnow of sociology at Princeton University, reminds us of the undiminished *Global Outreach of American Churches* (as the subtitle goes).¹⁸ That is a sobering thought, indeed, if men and women like Silas Whitely of *Ethiopia Unbound*, who slammed shut the door onto intercultural openness, are the ones being graduated from our theological schools.

Here, though, I have to pronounce both a *yes!* and a *no!* on Casely-Hayford. He has most definitely opened me up to God; alas, he has also closed me off. The reason is that *Ethiopia Unbound* capitalizes on some invidious, racialized essentializations, pitting European against African, black against white.¹⁹ A dualism like that is uncomfortably Manichaeian. The many of you here tonight who are neither white nor black know that between Englishness and Ethiopianism (as it were), American public discourse often excludes the middle. That is a reason why no one ought to graduate from Princeton without being immersed in a book like *The Future is Mestizo*, by Virgilio Elizondo, a Catholic prelate and one of America's most illuminating Hispanic theologians.²⁰ A favorite sociologist of mine, Stephen Warner of the University of Illinois, says this of how diaspora (immigrant) Christianities are changing America: "When Americans think of Christians, they will decreasingly be able to think simply of whites [and African Americans]. They will also think of Asian students conducting Bible studies and witnessing for Christ on college campuses nationwide. ... "Catholic" will no longer be code for "Irish, Polish, and Italian" but will have to include "Mexican, Filipino, and Vietnamese." When Americans think of Asians, they will not just think of exotic religious Others but also of believers who thump the Bible and ask you if you are saved. Race and religion are increasingly decoupling."²¹

¹⁶ Todd Johnson and Sun Young Chung, "Tracking Global Christianity's Statistical Centre of Gravity, ad 33– ad 2100," *International Review of Mission* 93/369 (2004): 166–81.

¹⁷ Gerrie ter Haar, *How God Became African: African Spirituality and Western Secular Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

¹⁸ Robert Wuthnow, *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

¹⁹ Wehrs, *Pre-Colonial Africa*, 35.

²⁰ Virgilio P. Elizondo, *The Future Is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000).

²¹ Stephen R. Warner, "The De-Europeanization of American Christianity." In *A Nation of*

Even so, Warner observes of white Americans (of whom I am one) that *we* “still tend to claim Christianity as [*our*] property,” “with a mixture of arrogance and exasperation,” “even when many of [*us*] wish [*we*] could disown it.”²² In a recent issue of *Theological Education*, Daniel Aleshire of the Association of Theological Schools makes this comment: “Racial diversity is crucial for effective theological education.”²³ A Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) sister institution that has reflected deeply on this is McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. David Esterline, of its faculty, asks this important question: “Are those of us in the majority culture ready to...set aside our ownership of the normative culture...and turn to listening, learning from and valuing those whose gifts are different from ours? If we expect all members of the household of God to be welcomed in our congregations, we [*students and faculty*] need to give careful attention to the ways we listen, learn, and teach in our seminaries.”²⁴

And so, as I close, I go back to Jonathan Sacks, whom I paraphrased earlier, except with this small change: that *theology* is a thing we make together, *interculturally*—and that, again, is why a seminary has got to be a welcoming environment. Theological curricula, however, are notoriously overcrowded; space can barely be found, unless someone yields some. And without space, how can a predisposition be fostered in our students to seek out the view from *anywheres*?²⁵ Theologically, a start can be made when the oneness that we have in Christ, spoken of in Ephesians, is not interpreted in ways that allow dominant communities to then use scripture to cancel out, ignore, or invalidate the concrete particularities of cultures that differ from their own. ■

Religions: The Politics of Pluralism in Multireligious America, ed. Stephen R. Prothero (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 247.

²² Warner, “De-Europeanization,” 233 (syntax reordered).

²³ Daniel O. Aleshire, “Gifts Differing: The Educational Value of Race and Ethnicity,” *Theological Education* 45/1 (2009): 15.

²⁴ David V. Esterline, “Multicultural Theological Education and Leadership for a Church without Walls.” In *Shaping Beloved Community: Multicultural Theological Education*, ed. David V. Esterline and Ogbu U. Kalu (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 17.

²⁵ I borrow the term “anywheres” from anthropologist Richard A. Schweder of the University of Chicago, whose elucidation of it can be found in his collection of essays, *Why Do Men Barbecue: Recipes for Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2: “The knowable world is incomplete if seen from any one point of view, incoherent if seen from all points of view at once, and empty if seen from nowhere in particular.”

Lecture

Covenant and Hope in Civil Society

by Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

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Professor Torrance and friends, I am touched and humbled to be here. It's hard for me to describe how moved I am, because I had no idea my ideas reached this far. It has been a very lonely undertaking, and to hear a resonance of one's ideas is very humbling, and therefore I thank you. I thank Dr. Rimmer DeVries, in whose merit this award exists, and I thank Princeton, one of the world's great theological seminaries, which has housed so many fine minds and made so many distinguished contributions to theology in the public domain. Something that my wife, Elaine, and I did not expect is just how beautiful Princeton is this time of the year. In fact, walking through Princeton Theological Seminary with the trees in blossom and reciting, "Glory be to God for dappled things," and thinking all sorts of wonderful thoughts struck me as the most persuasive argument for the existence of God and the goodness of the universe that I have come across in many years. All in all, I thank you and wish you, the faculty, the seminary, and all the students and staff continued blessing and success in all you do.

It is very moving for me to receive the award in the name of Abraham Kuyper, who taught, and proved in his own life, the relevance of the religious voice to

public life in quite an extraordinary way as prime minister in Holland just over a century ago. I was fascinated to sense this very real kinship between Kuyper's distinction between common grace and specific grace (particular grace) and the Jewish idea of the covenant of Noah with all humanity, and the covenant at Sinai specifically with the Jewish people. There is clearly a set of resonances, and differences: resonances between Kuyper's thought and Jewish thought of which I had genuinely been unaware. Of course, there is also in Judaism a third covenant, namely, the Abrahamic covenant, which brings together Jews, Christians, and Muslims. I couldn't think of a more relevant mode of direct conversation between us in these very difficult times.

I've been asked to speak about covenant, hope, and civil society. I am very much reminded of the occasion in which George Bernard Shaw was invited to deliver a lecture on English literature, and he asked, "How long do I have to speak," and they said, "Well, um, fifteen minutes." He asked, "How am I supposed to say everything I know and believe about English literature in fifteen minutes?" The reply came back, "Speak very slowly." So I'm going to speak very slowly, because we've got a lot to get through. And I think, therefore, the simplest way of dealing with these three central ideas of hope, covenant, and civil society in a limited span of time is to speak simply of the Jewish story, and I hope that you will find echoes in your own stories.

So let us begin with the thing that always struck me, a Jew, most forcibly about this people into which I was born, namely, the astonishing Jewish ability to survive catastrophe. The catastrophe of the destruction of the first Temple twenty-six centuries ago preserved a kind of freeze-frame of a moment when Jews sat and wept by the waters of Babylon, remembering Zion, and said, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" And yet, they did learn to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, they did return home, and somehow Jews and Judaism survived that destruction of the second Temple, dispersion, persecution, and, finally, the Holocaust. That ability to survive, and reaffirm life after tragedy, astonished thinkers as radically different as Pascal in the *Pensée*, and Nietzsche in *The Antichrist*. How was it that Jews continued to survive? The answer that always came to me, every time I studied it, was hope.

The Jewish people kept hope alive, and hope kept the Jewish people alive. And the word, *tikva*, which is the Hebrew word for *hope*, is a key word of the Hebrew Bible. Not accidentally, when Jews did eventually return to the land of their birth and belonging, Israel, sixty-two years ago, they chose as their national anthem *Ha Tikva*, "The Hope." No sooner than you give this answer you are faced with an obvious question: Doesn't everybody have hope? We human

beings all face an unknown and unknowable future. We all hope it's going to be good and not going to be bad. So in what sense is hope specific to a faith or a set of religious beliefs or a specific constellation of concepts? That's the question I ask: Is hope universal, or not? And the answer, as I came to see it, is a little like the concept of shame and guilt. I think most of us have felt guilt from time to time. Having a Jewish mother is not strictly necessary to a feeling of guilt, though it does help a great deal. And most of us have at some time or other experienced shame. Despite the fact that guilt and shame are fairly universal phenomena, Ruth Benedict and many others taught us that there can be such things as shame cultures and guilt cultures, and they are not the same. It therefore seems to me that as a parallel we can speak of hope cultures and nonhope cultures. To put it specifically, as Alasdair Macintyre put it in one of his early books, *Marxism and Christianity*, hope is a social virtue. There are cultures in which hope as a social virtue occupies a central place, and there are cultures in which it doesn't. In the history of Western civilization, and boldly overgeneralizing because we have only a little bit of time, we can say that non-hope cultures have taken two primary forms, which I call tragic cultures and optimistic cultures.

I draw a sharp distinction, which I will explain in a few minutes, between optimism and hope, which are to me completely separate things. So let us begin with tragic cultures, of which the supreme expression is Greece of the age of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Without going into any of the deep philosophical reflections on tragedy—of Nietzsche, Walter Kauffman, George Steiner, and so on—let me draw your attention to what in England we refer to as “the curious incident.” Sherlock Holmes says to Dr. Watson, “I draw your attention to the curious incident of the dog at night.” Dr. Watson says, “But the dog did nothing at night.” Holmes says, “Exactly, that was the curious incident.” The curious incident that fascinates me is that Jews of the third and second centuries BCE knew the Greeks. They knew Greek culture, they were ruled by Greece—first by the Ptolomies, then by the Seleucids—and yet there is no word in either Biblical Hebrew or Rabbinic Hebrew that means “tragedy.” That is the curious incident. Jews knew disaster, defeat, failure, suffering, and exile, and yet they had no concept of the “tragic.” When modern Hebrew needed the word, they simply borrowed the word. Do you know what the Hebrew for “tragedy” is? *Tragedia*. Now, how is it that Jews had all these experiences that you and I might call tragic, and yet they had no word, no concept for tragedy?

The briefest of answers, to cut to the chase, is that it seems to me that the classic concept of tragedy presupposes that humans are alone in a universe that is at best indifferent, at worst hostile, to our existence. We are ultimately powerless in the

face of some inexorable fate and there is no connection between what we are, or what we do, and what happens to us. That is the tragic view of the universe. And now it is obvious why there is no concept of the tragic in Judaism. Because fate is not inexorable. At one of the holiest moments in our holiest days on the Jewish New Year on the Day of Atonement, we say an early medieval prayer that contains the line “Repentance, prayer, and charity avert the evil decree.” In other words, there is no fate that cannot be reversed by turning to God. That, of course, is the theme of the book of Jonah. Jonah is told to go and tell the people of Nineveh that in forty days Nineveh will be destroyed. Of course, it isn’t destroyed, and Jonah knew it would not be destroyed because two things were going to happen. Number one, the people of Nineveh were going to repent; and number two, God was going to forgive.

As Hannah Arendt pointed out, forgiveness breaks the iron rule of causality: forgiving is the one action that is not a reaction. It breaks the predictable. The same is true of repentance. Proof of human free will lies in the possibility of repentance. In Judaism, complete repentance comes when you find yourself in the same circumstances you were in when you committed the initial sin, and this time you don’t sin because you are changed. That is complete repentance. The obvious example is the story of Joseph. You remember that in Genesis 37 it is Judah who proposes selling Joseph into slavery. Many years later the brothers don’t recognize Joseph. He’s an Egyptian called Zaphnath-Paaneah, and he constructs a situation that culminates in his taking Benjamin and saying, “I’m going to hold him as a slave.” Judah, who he thinks has repented but isn’t sure, is now given the precise opportunity to repeat the sin! He can walk away and leave Benjamin a slave. It is when Judah says, “No, let me be a slave and let Benjamin go free” that Joseph knows that Judah has repented. The second repentance demonstrates that we have free will, that we have choice, that we are moral agents. The fact that we can act differently next time means that the future need not be like the past. Time is not a story of eternal recurrence. Time is not simply what Plato called a “moving image of eternity.” A world in which there is repentance and forgiveness, in which the freedom and the grace of God is bestowed on us in God’s image, is not and cannot be a tragically configured universe. Or, as I put it very simply, Judaism is the principled defeat of tragedy in the name of hope. A world in which there is tragedy is a world without hope; a world in which there is hope is a world that defeats tragedy.

The second non-hope culture as it appeared in the West took shape in the seventeenth century in the context of the Enlightenment and the rise of science. That culture broadly took a view that by relying on reason rather than revelation we could banish the prejudices and the hatreds of the past. Science would allow us

to understand nature. Industry and technology would allow us to control nature. We would replace the endless, cyclical time of the world of myth with linear time and replace cyclical time with evolution or revolution. That would generate potentially open-ended and limitless progress that would allow us to progressively eliminate ignorance, poverty, disease, and so on. I call that the culture of optimism. Now, without getting involved in the endless arguments that get really splendid, let's forget whether the Enlightenment was secular or religious, or succeeded or failed. One way or another for most of us, there was some turning point, whether it was the Holocaust or Hiroshima, or Stalinist Russia, whether it was global capitalism, climate change, or the failure of philosophical foundationalism and the birth of postmodernism, one way or another, I don't think most of us are optimists any more. We no longer believe in the inevitability and the limitlessness of progress.

My favorite story related to this tells of a Russian politician back in the old days who said, "Comrades, yesterday we stood at the edge of the abyss! But today we have taken a giant step forward." I think we have probably lived through the era of optimism. I want to state the fundamental proposition that the death of optimism does not mean the end of hope. There is a fundamental difference between optimism and hope. Optimism is a passive condition. Hope is an active one. Optimism is the belief that the world is going to get better. Hope is the belief that if we work hard enough, together we might be able to make the world better. It does not require courage—just a certain kind of naivety—to be an optimist. But it requires a great deal of courage to have hope. No Jew, knowing what we do of history, can be an optimist. But no Jew, no believing Jew, can ever let go of hope. This is why, given that the twenty-first century is likely not to be an age of optimism, we really need an age of hope if we are to avoid an age of tragedy. And, you know, that is hope. That's the first part of my journey into understanding how Jews survived because of hope.

A second phenomenon is equally remarkable, perhaps in a way more remarkable: Jews were and are a nation. Our existence as a nation is defined in Exodus chapter 19:6: "You shall be for me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." We are a nation. And yet, for twenty centuries Jews existed without any of the normal preconditions of a nation. They were scattered throughout the world, everywhere a minority. They had none of the things you normally associate with a nation. They had no state. They had no land. They had no home. They were dispersed throughout the world. They had no sovereignty. They had no power. Very often, they had no rights. Jews did not live in the same territory. They didn't speak the same language. The Jews in Europe spoke Yiddish. The Jews in Spain and Portugal spoke Ladino. They spoke different languages! They didn't

even share the same fate. While the Jews of northern Europe were being massacred in 1096 during the first Crusade, the Jews of Spain were enjoying their golden age. They lacked every feature of a nation, and yet they saw themselves and were seen by others as a nation. And they existed entirely as clusters of families gathered together in communities, and their central institutions were the home, the school, and the synagogue. I wanted to know how this happened. When I became Chief Rabbi, I got a little involved in politics. I began to study politics and the history of political thought, and that was when I discovered something absolutely extraordinary. I began to see that there is something in the Hebrew Bible that is almost completely missing from mainstream political thought in Europe, the thought of Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, and Rousseau, all of whom were in active dialogue and were heavily influenced by the Hebrew Bible. Yet something in the Bible is not there in them at all. Each one of them was interested in the foundational moment of the political system.

What you discover when you read the Bible closely is that there is not one foundational moment—there are two. The second one is found in 1 Samuel 8, when the people come to Samuel and ask him to appoint a king. What Samuel then does is execute a social contract very much on Hobbesian lines. He says, “Guys, you really don’t want a king. He’ll take your fields and your vineyards, he’ll take you into the army,” etc. He tells them that they’ll have to give up certain rights in order to create this central power, this leviathan, this king who will ensure the rule of law and defense of the realm. Nonetheless, they want this to happen. And that becomes a social contract that creates the Kingdom of Israel. However, that is the second, not the first, foundational moment. The first one happened several centuries earlier, at Mount Sinai in the days of Moses, when the people made not a contract but a covenant with God (Exod. 19 and 20). That is their birth as a nation. Perhaps today we would call it their birth as a society. What we have in the Bible is a more complex and subtle political philosophy than we find elsewhere in Western thought. We have two things: the social contract that creates a state, and the social covenant that creates a society (or, as we might call it, civil society), and these are quite different things.

Let me move to the politics of now and explain how this works in contemporary European and maybe similarly in American terms. Politics for the last fifty years in Europe has been dominated by two institutions: the market and the state. If you’re on the right of politics you prefer the market, and if you’re on the left, you prefer the state. Between the two of them they exhaust the solutions to political problems. That is the choice, the market or the state. However, we know perfectly well that there are many social problems that cannot be solved by either the market or the state. Many of these problems are caused by the

breakdown of marriages and families, and the breakup of communities. It was those local institutions, families and communities, that Tocqueville, when he visited America in 1830 and 1832, regarded as the very foundations of society as a whole. Earlier, Edmund Burke in England, called families and communities “little platoons.” Somehow or other, families and communities are not institutions of either the market or the state. While people were beginning to notice the failure of politics to address these issues, academics from many different disciplines (economics, sociology, sociobiology, games theory) were beginning to see something fundamental: that competition—which is at the heart of the free market, at the heart of democratic politics, and at the heart of Darwinian biology—is not enough for any system to survive. Thinkers in these disciplines began to realize that any group needs to be held together by habits of cooperation, not competition. And they are essential, as economists, sociologists, and sociobiologists began to see in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Cooperative habits are essential to what sociologists call trust, economists call social capital, and sociobiologists, now called evolutionary psychologists, call reciprocal altruism. When I brought up this issue of politics—state versus market on the one hand, and the logic of cooperation on the other—I suddenly realized that that is the heart of the distinction between social contract on the one hand and social covenant on the other. Commercial contracts create the market. The social contract creates the state. But the logic of cooperation doesn’t work on the basis of contract, it works on the basis of covenant. What is the difference between a contract and a covenant? In a contract, two or more individuals pursuing their own interests come together to make an exchange for mutual benefit. In a covenant, two or more individuals, each respecting the dignity and freedom of the other, come together in a bond of loyalty and trust to share interests and sometimes even to share their lives, by pledging their faithfulness to one another and to do together what neither can do alone. So a contract is a transaction, but a covenant is a relationship. A contract is about interests, a covenant is about identity, about “we.” Contracts are about benefits, but covenants are about transformations. Whereas states and markets are created and sustained by contracts, families, friendships, and communities are held together by covenants. If we can’t think in covenantal terms, only in contractual ones, if all we can think of is state and market, or, in other words, power on the one hand or wealth on the other, then families will fracture, communities will atrophy, and society itself will fragment, which is exactly what has been happening for the last fifty years in all the nation-states of Europe. When you focus only on state and market, on contracts, and you forget about covenants, then families, communities, friendships, and loyalties begin to erode until they no longer hold society together.

By understanding the difference between covenant and contract, I was first able to solve the question with which I began, which was, how did Jews survive for two thousand years as a nation without a state? The answer suddenly occurred to me because, despite all they had lost, with the state and with its social contract, the covenant remained. And that held them together. As families, as communities, it held them together. If you ever doubt the power of ideas remember that without the idea of covenant the Jewish people would have ceased to exist after the Roman conquest. It was only an idea that kept them alive. Second, it resolved for me the obvious question about the place of religion in politics. And the answer, given by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*, is that the proper sphere of religion is in civil society itself, in that arena of covenantal relationships that have nothing to do with the state, nothing to do with the market, but everything to do with families, communities, charities, and congregations—all the things that have influence without having power. It was de Tocqueville who understood that it was those things that constituted the greatness of religion in America and made it the friend, not the enemy, of liberty. He called it the art of association, which was, for him, a people's essential apprenticeship in liberty.

This point had been made earlier, to my surprise, by the one Englishman who played a supporting part on the American side in the American Revolution. I'm feeling awkward because I'm claiming some kind of kinship to the one Englishman who was on the American side. His name was Thomas Paine, author of the pamphlet *Common Sense*, which sold 100,000 copies in 1776, earning him the name "father of the American Revolution." Paine begins *Common Sense* with the distinction between state and society, or, as he calls it, between government and society, and he bases it, exactly as I have done, on the Hebrew Bible. That's what is fascinating, because Thomas Paine, as I'm sure you know, was an atheist. Because he was an atheist, he was able to read the Bible and recognize that it had a political dimension that made sense even to him, even in purely secular terms. I say this because I have not seen it in the literature. Paine offers a very elegant refutation of the famous argument of early John Rawls that the language of public reason means that you should not talk in religious terms or use religious texts in political arguments. In a wonderful refutation, Thomas Paine used public reason, as an atheist, quoting the Bible.

Having said something about hope on the one hand, and civil society and covenant on the other, it simply remains to ask: Are civil society and hope connected in any way? I think the simple answer is this: civil society is the natural habitat of hope, because hope is born in families, sustained in communities, told in narratives, rehearsed in ritual, and expressed in prayer. What would Jewish hope be

without Passover, our festival of freedom, when we tell that story of hope? What would Jewish hope be without the Day of Atonement, the day of repentance and forgiveness that tells us that however wrong we were in the past there is hope for us; that if we turn to God, he turns to us? Hope does not float in some remote disembodied Platonic metaphysical space. Hope, like language, is a social phenomenon; it is lived in the concreteness of a community and its canonical texts. In the last ten or twenty years, we've had wonderful substitutes for community, on the Web, blogosphere, YouTube, and Facebook. I regard these virtual substitutes for community as great, but they are not substitutes for the daily face-to-face encounters in which we become literate in the language of love and loyalty. Hope has its own ecology and it is born whenever and whenever human beings reach out to God and to one another and discover that "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me." Hope is the redemption of solitude.

Friends, where are we in the twenty-first century—in the liberal, democratic West? Sadly, we seem to be left with three institutions in which people place their hopes: liberal democratic politics, the free market, and science and technology. Each one of them is a momentous achievement that we should value, but not one of them is able to answer the three great questions that each of us must ask. Who am I? Why am I here? How then shall I live? The liberal democratic polity gives us freedom. The market gives us choices. Technology gives us power. But none of them can tell us how to use that freedom, how to make those choices, how to exercise that power. And clearly, we do need something more. That *something* I call hope, covenant, and civil society, where we come together collectively and rediscover hope in the love we have for one another, which is a mirror image of the love God has for us. In a global economy, there are winners and losers. Without something like faith, there is nothing to give hope to the losers. A world without hope is a dangerous world; and that is why we have to work to bring hope back into our social ecology, through the strength of our families, the power of our communities, and our ability to reach out in love to friend and stranger alike.

I hope I've shown in my words today that hope, government, and civil society are connected. They are not the only way to live; there are alternatives. There have been tragic cultures, and there have been optimistic cultures. But tragic cultures and optimistic cultures have a habit of dying, and it is hope cultures that survive. Because this has been a rather heavy lecture, I end with a personal anecdote that has cheered me greatly. About eight years ago, I acquired a personal tutor in hope. It is called a satellite navigation system. It came with my car and I was absolutely fascinated by this thing. You key in your destination and a few

seconds later a very polite lady tells you to go straight for three hundred yards and turn left. She tells you where to go. If Moses had had one of these things, we would've saved thirty-nine years at least. But what really fascinated me as I began to study this thing is clearly, whoever invented a satellite navigation system had never, ever met a Jewish driver. You see, what happens when this polite lady says, "Go straight for three hundred yards and turn left," the Jewish driver says, "What does she know! I've been driving around here fifty years, I know you go three hundred yards and you turn *right!*" And I am fascinated to see how this satellite navigation system responds to this strange and unexpected turn of events. After all, she's only done what she was asked to do. What I've learned, first of all, is that this "person" is infinitely patient. She never loses her cool. When you do exactly the opposite of what you've been instructed to do, she gets quiet for a while, and then with enormous patience and tact she sends up a little signal, saying, "Recalculating the route." Lo and behold, she tells you how to get there from the place that you, as a *schlemiel*, had got into by not listening to the instructions in the first place! From this I learned a basic principle in life: no matter how many wrong turns you take, and however lost you may be, if you know where you want to get, there is a route from here to there. If that is not a signal of hope, what is? ■

Lecture

“The Promises of God”: New African Missionary Initiatives in the Lengthened Shadow of the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference

by Jehu J. Hanciles

Jehu Hanciles is Associate Professor of the history of Christianity and globalization, and Director of the Center for Missiological Research at Fuller Theological Seminary. A leading researcher in migratory change and its impact on Christian missionary work, Dr. Hanciles gave the 2010 Students' Lectureship on Missions at Princeton Theological Seminary. He delivered this lecture, the second of three, on November 30 in the main lounge.

Today's topic is one that I come to with just a tiny bit of trepidation. Yesterday evening one of the points I made was a general reference to the recent transformations within global Christianity, often referred to as the “shift.” The sources of reference to this shift constantly strike me. Just recently I saw the following reference in an article in the journal *Foreign Affairs*: “Around the world religion is on the rise. It is growing in countries with a wide variety of religious traditions and levels of economic development. Traditionally seen as a Western or European religion steeped in that continent's culture, Christianity is now returning to its roots by becoming a post-Western religion dominated by the peoples, cultures, and countries of the global South. For U.S. policymakers—many of whom currently consider Islamism to be the most ardent religious challenge to Washington's foreign policy—the politics of global Christianity may soon prove just as pivotal.”¹

I read this excerpt just to make the point that nowhere have the recent transformations within global Christianity been as dramatic as in Africa. The African experience epitomizes the shift not only in terms of its shared demographic scale but also in its unexpectedness and missionary significance, yet just a century

¹ Scott M. Thomas, “A Globalized God,” *Foreign Affairs* 89, 6 (November/December, 2010).

ago, very serious doubt remained in European missionary minds about the prospects of Christianity in Africa. This much was evident at the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. Now here's why I had a little trepidation. Given the fact that this is the hundredth anniversary of this historic meeting, I assume by now you have had your fill of discussions and references to Edinburgh 1910. For those of you who have managed to avoid all those discussions and references, you probably knew it was too good to last. So I aim to spend just a brief time reviewing this meeting, because my main intention is to excavate the understanding of African Christianities that came out of it and why those understandings turned out to be such a major misread of what was happening on the continent.

THE EDINBURGH 1910 CONFERENCE

The conference met in Edinburgh and was spearheaded by two prominent Evangelical leaders from different nations— Joe Oldham of Great Britain, and John Mott of the United States. It was one of the most defining missionary gatherings in the history of Christianity, in that the meeting showcased Protestant missionary internationalism. The widespread view that it marked the beginning of the ecumenical movement is somewhat problematic given not only the fact that the conference planners rejected the title “ecumenical” and the movement itself really was a gathering of delegates not from churches or even denominations but from foreign missionary societies who were allotted places strictly on the basis of their annual income. Whatever consensus emerged from this meeting didn't last too long either. But, convened at the height of Western colonial expansion, this historic meeting bristled with optimistic self-confidence. Its outlook mirrored the age of empire. Its ideals reflected the overheated confidence of a movement at full tide. Here is what Ken Ross had to say:

The territorial understanding of Christian expansion was allied with an activist mentality and a military metaphor. The conference was marked by the mood of the Protestant missionary movement, often expressed in the vocabulary of aggression, attack, conquest and crusade. Participants saw nothing incongruous in using the language of violent military campaigns to describe their missionary engagement and aspirations. The enthusiasm and drive which marked the conference drew much more than it realized on the optimistic self-confidence of imperial expansion and technological advance. The satellite of history exposes these weak-

nesses, yet it also points up the significance of Edinburgh 1910 in ways which were not possible at the time.²

A sense of urgency and self-confidence shines through the conference reports. The conveners were confident that it was possible to embark on a campaign that could take the gospel to all the non-Christian world. That is revealing because in keeping with a Christendom outlook, Edinburgh 1910 conceived of the world in terms of two distinct territorial blocks: Christendom and heathendom. In that sense it was not really about world mission, it was about mission to certain parts of the world. After much heated debate, significant sections of that world were excluded from the purview of the meeting because they were deemed either Christian or revealing Christian influence: these included African-American peoples in North America and South America. Latin America was also excluded because of ecclesiastical politics. Needless to say, Africa and Asia were central to its focus. This is important because it tells us something about why non-Western representation at the meeting was limited to a handful.

Only nineteen of the 1,215 official delegates came from the non-Western world. The meeting was dominated by Anglo-American missionary representatives. Here is the breakdown: mainly British and North Americans were represented, 169 from continental Europe, a couple of dozen or so from white colony South African and Australia, and only nineteen from the non-Western world. For the longest time, any book you read about this conference maintained that there was not a single African present. This was until very recently, when Brian Stanley in his definitive work on the movement unearthed the fact that there was a sole African in attendance at the meeting.³ Reverend Mark Hayford from the Gold Coast, or Ghana, whom he described as an uncharacteristically westernized African. Hayford's presence at this conference was remarkable both in its singularity and obscurity. It would take a century of scholarly research to finally bring his attendance to light, and what is more, Hayford is not mentioned in the official records of the conference. So, the non-Western world in terms of representation was on the periphery, even though non-Western representatives were allowed to give a few addresses and contributed to the debates.

² Kenneth Ross, "Edinburgh 1910: Its Place in History," November 13, 2010.

³ Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 98.

FOCUS ON AFRICA: OPTIMISM WEIGHED DOWN BY FOREBODING

But what of Africa? European missionary agencies as a rule had never devoted their best resources or sent their finest and brightest to Africa. It was Asia, particularly China, that long captured the European missionary imagination. Yet Africa, a continent three times the size of Europe, could not be ignored. The report on Africa at this meeting estimated that it had 150 million souls awaiting the arrival of Christian messengers. It noted that there were four million Christians in Egypt and Ethiopia, whose church dated to apostolic times, but it dismissed those Christian communities as having long ceased to be missionary. Strangely, there was no reference to the more recently formed Christian communities in West Africa and East Africa. Thus, from the perspective of the Edinburgh conference, “The bulk of the population of Africa is immersed in darkness.”

But Edinburgh reflected a schizophrenic outlook as far as Africa was concerned. There was, on the one hand, unbounded confidence that no part of Africa was shut against the true missionary. This estimation of the ripeness of Africa was influenced by two major considerations. First, European advancement on the continent was now such that very few areas of the continent were free from colonial influence and accessibility. The second reason for this confidence was the view that “animistic” societies were incapable of mounting resistance to Christian missionaries. Now this reference to *animism* requires some explanation.

By the early twentieth century, *animism*, a term coined by British anthropologist Edward Tyler, described belief systems and ritual practices that revolved around the worship of spirits and souls. Europeans used it to describe people they deemed to be in the lower stages of human development. So *animism* was used to describe practices that were not only pagan but also crude and irrational. In fact, animism was the chief form and expression of what was considered heathenism. Now animism received considerable attention at Edinburgh 1910. The unanimity of opinion was that it was essentially weak, and intellectually and morally bankrupt, and therefore inevitably goes down under sustained missionary effort. From this point of view, Africa provided an abundant harvest for missionary labor precisely because here, “as in no other continent was a dark, illiterate, dissevered and degraded paganism to be enlightened and lifted into the Church of Christ.”⁴ So that was one reason for the optimism: the participants

⁴ *World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission I—Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 242.

were confident that Africa was ripe for Christianity, that Africans would turn to the Christian faith in huge numbers. In the words of one of the reports, "There is some ground for thinking that the specific doctrines of the evangelical creed appeal more directly to the African mind than to the heathen mind in any other quarters of the world."⁵

But this evidently positive, optimistic, and confident assessment of the prospects of Christianity on the continent was in stark contrast to reports and assessments that are best described as cautiously negative. The upbeat pronouncements about the ripeness of Africa for the gospel were virtually negated by a palpable apprehension about the impact and influence of African Islam. The conference noted that there were two forces contending for the soul of Africa: Christianity, and Islam. And it gave Islam the upper hand by some margin. It estimated that there were sixty million Muslims on the African continent, more or less 40 percent of the non-Christian population. Missionary feedback indicated that Islam was more aggressive and was proceeding rapidly and continuously in all parts of the continent. In fact, in the words of one report, "Mohammedan traders are finding their way into the remotest parts of the continent and it is well known that every Mohammedan trader is more or less a Mohammedan missionary."⁶ And so the official conclusion from the assessment about Africa and the African continent recognized that it faced a defining moment in its history, and it concluded that if things continue as they are now tending, "Africa may become a Mohammedan continent."⁷

"THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY"

As it turned out, the Edinburgh 1910 conference was, in the words of the apostle Paul, "peering through a glass darkly." At first glance there is much to justify this cautious pessimism. In 1900, there were roughly nine to ten million Christians in Africa, just under 10 percent of the population. Continent-wide, the Christian presence appeared precarious. Christian communities existed merely as minority groups; recognizable Christian presence was nonexistent in many areas; Muslims outnumbered Christians six to one. In other words, the opening decade of the twentieth century provided very little indication of the phenomenal and unparalleled growth that would transform African Christianity into a prominent expression and representation of global Christianity by the closing decade.

⁵ *World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission 4—the Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 31.

⁶ *World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission 1*, 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

How did Edinburgh get it wrong? They were not prophets, but the neglect of African Christian communities already in existence—especially the lack of acknowledgement of the huge role that African agencies and African initiatives had played in the spread of the gospel up to that point—is perplexing. Then again, missionary thinking then and now privileged European activity and European presence. And Edinburgh 1910, meeting at the height of this scrambled era, linked its assessments and its calculations to the designs and controlling efforts of European powers. It was convinced that the spread of Christianity in Africa and elsewhere depended as far as human means go on the actions and resources of the Western Church.

THE AFRICAN STORY

So we must allow for the possibility that there existed a parallel universe, so to speak, outside the control of European missionary agency, beyond the range of its perceptions and cognitive framework. From the start African initiatives, African agency and creative energies were vital to the establishment and spread of Christianity on the continent. It could not be otherwise. Yes, most European missionaries enjoyed enormous influence and venerated status. Yes, European missionary clout and resources invariably paved the way for missionary expansion. Yet these initial steps should not be equated with Christian conversion. Foreign action and influence was everywhere provisional and subject to limitations. Preaching of the gospel by European missionaries seldom produced many or mass conversions. In fact, the majority of Africans had only minimal exposure to a white missionary. European missionaries grew dramatically in numbers in the early decades of the twentieth century. But African Christian agents increased even more during that period, and the ratio of African agents to Europeans was at least six to one. Almost everywhere, they were the ones who formed the vanguard of Christian expansion on the continent. In short, the growth of Christianity in Africa was largely the fruit of African enterprise. The vast majority of Africans had heard the gospel from other Africans. That is what Edinburgh 1910 ignored in its calculations.

A century later, the nature and dynamism of African Christianity confounds its prognosis. Islam in Africa has indeed expanded vigorously, but so has Christianity. In 1910, the African mission field had the smallest number of Christians of any continent outside Oceania. By the end of the century, Africa was transformed into an area experiencing the fastest growth of any region in the world. From roughly nine million or so in 1900, African Christians have mushroomed to over 360 million, over 40 percent of the population. This rate of growth has

no parallels in the history of Christianity. The World Christian Encyclopedia calculates that the church in Europe and North America is losing an estimated 6,000 church members a day. African Christians are increasing at a rate of 23,000 new Christians a day. When defections from the faith are counted for the net increase, in other words, the new additions to the church is at least 1.5 million a year. If the current trend continues, the African Christian population would be second only to Latin America in terms of size.

AFRICAN MIGRATIONS AND THE NEW MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

We find ourselves now compelled to recognize that African Christianity has become integral to any assessment of global Christianity. African Christianity has emerged as a major center and factor in the global Christian missionary movement. It's a complex story. Throughout Africa, the decades that followed political independence were marked by endemic political chaos and economic crisis. Myriad catastrophes afflicted the continent. It was in this context that these new African Pentecostal movements emerged, and the growth has been nothing less than extraordinary. But as African Christianity has grown, Africans have been dislodged from their continent in massive numbers. There is a mammoth tide of migrants of Africans both within and outward from the continent. The two factors are linked; the massive growth of Christianity and the massive migration of Africans have combined to galvanize African Christianity as a major missionary force, and many of these African migrants have settled in destination countries outside Africa and established new churches and Christian communities. By the end of the century, Africans were widely dispersed among wealthy industrialized countries of the north, and the volume continues to grow.

Every Christian migrant is a potential missionary. By the year 2000, African Christians in Europe numbered in excess of three million. In Europe in particular, their vitality has contributed sharply to the growth of Christian communities. In Britain, the European country with the longest ties to Africa, African churches by 2000 accounted for more than 3,000 congregations. A century ago, Charles Spurgeon's 500-seat Metropolitan Tabernacle at Elephant and Castle in South London was the largest Baptist church, with thousands of white English worshippers. Today, the largest Baptist church in Britain is the Calvary Charismatic Church led by Ghanaian pastor Francis Sarpong. The congregation is mainly composed of Africans and African immigrants. As some of you may know, the largest church in the UK, and for that matter, in Western Europe, is a Nigerian-led Kingsway International Christian Centre, established in 1992. It has grown from three hundred worshippers to about 12,000 meeting on any given Sunday.

We can multiply the examples. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, a Nigerian-based movement, established its first church in Britain in 1989. Within fifteen years it had expanded to 141 churches with a total of eighteen thousand members. And, of course, the best known fact is that the largest church in all of Europe is a 25,000-member Embassy for the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations, in Kiev, Ukraine, founded in 1993 by Sunday Adelaja. Here in the United States, African churches have also expanded rapidly since the 1980s. And the rise of this movement, its vigorous missionary expansion, is clearly beyond the reckoning of the minds at Edinburgh 1910.

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Let's talk about the American experience. America is a quintessential immigrant nation. Throughout the history of this country, immigrant congregations have acted as bastions of fervent religiosity, evangelized marginalized communities, and given tremendous boosts to foreign missionary movements. We still look at 1910 as kind of a peak of immigrant intake, not in terms of sheer numbers but in terms of immigrants as a percentage of the population. But we're getting very close to that peak again. The United States is once again the main destination of international migrants. International migrants account for 13 percent of the American population, with the prospect of rising to 19 percent (the earlier, original, peak, in 1910, was actually 14.3 percent). So there is a very clear indication that the current trajectory will surpass that. It is important to know that 90 percent of the new migrants arrived after 1960 and that they come from over 150 countries. The current wave of immigration, basically from 1965, has already transformed the United States into the most diverse nation on the planet. There is every indication that the impact of this new wave of immigrants on the religious landscape is likely to be more extensive than that of any previous wave.

AMERICAN AND THE NEW AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS

What about the African element? The presence of Africans in the United States has a long and significant and, some would say, painful history. In 1800, America had the largest community of Africans anywhere in the world outside Africa. When slavery was eventually abolished, in 1865, there were roughly 4.5 million Africans in the United States, or 14 percent of the population. But in part because of a lack of colonial ties, and the state of Africans in this country, very few Africans migrated voluntarily to the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those Africans who did migrate typically were whites from Egypt, Cape Verde, and South Africa. Black Africans would begin to feature

prominently in voluntary African migration to the United States only after the 1970s. Yet by the closing decade of the twentieth century, over 38,000 Africans were being admitted annually into the United States, a higher intake than at any time in its history, even including the period of the slave trade. The United States has become the chief destination among industrialized countries of African immigrants. In fact, African immigrants represent one of the fastest rising groups within the immigrant population, even though it still holds a very small percentage of all immigrants in this country.

Let me give you a very quick profile of African immigrants. More than 75 percent arrived in the country after 1990. Immigrants from Nigeria outnumber all other nationalities from the continent. The majority come from Anglophone West Africa. The African immigrants are among the most youthful of the new immigrants in this country. Females account for roughly 45 percent of the total. Educational attainment among them is quite high, much higher than most immigrant groups and even higher in some cases than the native population. African immigrants are also more proficient in English overall than are the foreign born.

Like all other immigrant groups, when African immigrants arrive, they form associations and depend on social networks, primarily religious organizations. Churches play a significant role in identity formation, economic survival, and spiritual nurture of these groups. But these churches and religious communities also take missionary initiatives very seriously. The majority of African churches in this country, indeed in the West, start as a regular Bible study meeting in somebody's apartment. From there, they typically grow rapidly, while exhibiting a very strong missionary impulse.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God is the largest African Pentecostal church in the United States. It has more than 6,000 parishes worldwide in more than eighty countries and more than two million members. The first Redeemed Christian Church of God parish was established in the United States in 1992 in Detroit, Michigan. Twelve families led by an engineer employed by Ford motors, who was a Nigerian immigrant. By 2005, there were 175 Redeemed Christian Church of God parishes in the United States with at least 10,000 members. That same year, the church bought a five-hundred-acre property in Floyd, Texas, worth millions of dollars. This property is to be developed as the movement's headquarters. By 2008, or the last time I checked, there were in the United States three hundred Redeemed Christian Church of God parishes. The Redeemed Christian Church of God is an example of an institutional movement. In actual fact, the majority of African immigrant congregations or churches start as individuals initiatives.

Let me tell you the story of Bishop Darlington Johnston, of Bethel World Outreach Church, Michigan. You may recall Liberia's seven-year civil war. It claimed 250,000 lives and produced over one million refugees. Among the many churches in the capital, Monrovia, was Bethel World Outreach, a vibrant and flourishing ministry headed by Darlington Johnston. It was one of the fastest-growing churches in the country, with over two thousand members. In 1990, just when the situation in his country was beginning to spiral out of control, Darlington Johnston left Liberia to attend a conference here in the United States. It was not his first trip to the United States. In fact he had spent ten years in the United States studying, acquiring various degrees. But this time, while he was in the United States, Liberia suffered a profound political and social disintegration.

At first it seemed like their prolonged stay would last only a matter of months. But because of the Liberian situation, this ruinous civil war, the months turned into years. So an individual who came as a visitor became a displaced refugee. Darlington Johnston began to pray, as he explains it, and seek direction from God. The divine response, he recounts, was clear and emphatic: "Don't be refugees, be missionaries." That was a message he had from the Lord. So in August 1990 he got together a group of seventeen Liberians and started Sunday worship, at Blackburn University Center at Howard University in Washington, DC. After two months they had grown to forty members, so they moved to a different meeting place. After two years of growth, they moved to an old movie theatre on Georgia Avenue in the heart of Silver Spring. In the space of ten years, what began as a small Liberian fellowship had flowered into a community of faith comprising people from forty-five different nations.

Bethel World Outreach Church is now one of the largest African immigrant churches in this country, with a membership of over three thousand. Average attendance at its three Sunday services, the first of which is conducted entirely in French, was 1,300 when I last checked three years ago. Not only that, it has grown from one church to over two hundred churches globally, with a total membership of 30,000 under the name Bethel World Outreach Ministries International. It not only plants churches and conducts evangelistic meetings in different parts of the world, it also builds schools, invests in economic projects, and engages in various humanitarian endeavors.

Out of Africa, where the massive growth of Christianity has taken place in a context of extensive pathological crises, has emerged a phenomenal missionary movement. The rate of growth of African churches, in the United States and Europe, is quite astonishing. When I did my research on these churches six years ago, I found out that 10 percent of the pastors had a doctorate, and many of

them emphasized not only spiritual empowerment but attaining success within American society as part of their message. These churches everywhere place supreme emphasis not only on personal faith and the power of the gospel, but on the power of the gospel to deliver, to heal, to prosper, and to transform the socio-political order. Everywhere, the spiritual element is strongly emphasized.

The outlook remains complex. For these churches, encounter with Western societies is attended by complex assimilation patterns and transnational existence. The research suggests that their capacity for cross-cultural outreach increases over time as they adapt to their environment. The extent to which they will impact Western society remains an open question, but impact it they will.

The Edinburgh 1910 conference surprises us occasionally. As you read through its reports every now and then, you come across a statement that is written with striking clarity but also with prophetic insight. One such statement reads thus: "The best converts of the soil of uncivilized heathenism according to the evidence received, represent a beautiful type of piety, and just as many apparent as we learned religious lessons by coming into touch with the piety of childhood, so it may well happen that the Christianity of Europe is destined to be recalled if not to forgotten truths, at least to neglected graces by the infant churches that are just beginning to live their lives on the basis of mercy, the commandments, and the promises of God."⁸ Today, our own calculations and predictions are safe only when they are also informed by the promises of God. ■

⁸ *World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission 4*, 36 f.

Lecture

The Flesh Became (the) Word: Constructing Counternarratives for Gender, Race, and Class

by Jacqui Lewis

The Reverend Dr. Jacqui Lewis is senior minister at Middle Collegiate Church in New York City and a nationally recognized speaker and preacher on the topics of racial justice and reconciliation. She gave the Women in Church and Ministry Lecture on April 8, 2010, in the Main Lounge of the Mackay Campus Center.

The last time this lecture was scheduled, there was a snowstorm and today it's like summer! In the interim, my congregation and I experienced a thoughtful Lenten season. My husband I took a research Sabbath to South Africa and Ghana, and we returned to spend Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter with my congregation in New York. Holy Week at Middle Church was a great experience, with *Jesus Christ Superstar* on Monday, a Seder/Agape meal on Thursday, and a celebration of *El Viernes Santo* with a Spanish cantor, flamenco dancing, and a *tenebrea* celebration on Friday. On Sunday we had a sunrise celebration and two other worship celebrations with two choirs, brass, and children singing. I hope your Easter was amazing!

My parents were with us for Holy Week, and spending time with them was a joy. They are seventy-three and seventy-six, young to my mind but older than they ever have been, of course. They move more slowly; they think about the end of their lives. When I am with them, I realize how very fortunate I am. I am not sure exactly how they did what they did—raising five of us, sending us all to college, teaching us to be confident in a world that was difficult for them and that can still be difficult for people of color.

When I am with them, I realize that I have spent a lot of time in my life thinking about what they did—for better or for worse—to shape my siblings and me into

the people we have become. I did not always speak of it this way, but I would say the question of how we become a self has been a lifelong inquiry. I think the question began to take place in my own life, and it became the research question for my Ph.D. Most scholars will say that their research questions are at least in part autobiographical. Given who my parents are, how did I get to be me, and my siblings who they are? Why are we so different? Why are all five of us so much alike—driven, gregarious? My parents—two people from Mississippi, raised by single moms in the Jim Crow south, starting a family on an Air Force base in Nebraska, migrating to Chicago in the early sixties, with the Kennedys and King as heroes—how did they teach me and my siblings to love everybody, to be comfortable with white folks, to have open minds? How did they *do* that? I recall wondering at a fairly early age.

What were the other factors that gave each of us a sense of racial identity, a sense of gender identity? What gave us our sense of place in this country and as global citizens? They pushed us very hard; education was a must; they exposed us to music and the arts. Each of us has achieved most of what they hoped for us, which was to be more than they could be. We are teachers and lawyers and army colonels and preachers and entrepreneurs. We own homes and can travel and, to our parents' eyes, we are learned and prosperous. Our stories are more than they dreamed would happen to and for us—how did that happen? We have stretched beyond what they could have imagined as Black folk born during the Depression, walking past the high school closest to them to the Colored High School; graduating from high school and attending college on the G.I. Bill, my dad and mom are witnesses to a narrative arc outside of their best hopes for their five children.

How did that happen, and what else shaped our stories? I realize that these questions of identity—race, gender, class—are questions I had long before I heard the term *womanist* and was aware of the ways they are inextricably conjoined in our culture and around the globe.

I thought about it when listening to Freda Gardner talk about education and Jim Loder talk about the transforming moment. I thought about it when Brian Blount was talking about the gospel creating a pocket of resistance or what I now call a counternarrative to the status quo. I thought about identity when I was learning to preach with Cleo La Rue and Jim Kay—thought about it in classes that addressed the empire with Mark Taylor and ethics with Peter Paris. I thought about identity when thinking about theology and feminism with Kathy Sakenfeld.

How do folk get to be the folk they are, and what role does the Church have in re-creating or transforming that identity toward wholeness and *shalom*?

I thought about identity when I was a pastor in Trenton, thinking about how the Church could empower poor women and children to be more in charge of their lives—how they could take in the Holy as a resource for transformation. I thought about how their lives could be restored—re-storied—because of Spirit at work. Then, after six or so years in that new church development named Imani, after preaching and teaching and thinking about the ways to sustain a transforming moment, I went back to graduate school to work on it in a program of psychology and religion. I wrote a book about it, *The Power of Stories*, and I am talking to you about it today.

My core thesis is that we become the words that are spoken to us and about us: The flesh becomes the word. We are storied selves. And the self can be re-storied with new, transformative counternarratives around race, gender, sexual orientation, and class. Re-storying identity is a task for congregational and ministry leaders. This is a lecture on leadership.

I have a lot to say to you in only an hour. So let me start by locating myself in this conversation, then offering a disclaimer, and finally giving us some bullet points on which to focus. In terms of location, I am an oldest child who thinks really hard about what makes the world turn. I think of myself as a womanist scholar who is a preacher and pastor first. I know my own subjectivity shapes the manner in which I ask questions and shapes my interpretive lens; therefore, reflexivity—reflecting on my own experience—is always key.

As a womanist, I consider the interrelationship of race, class, and gender issues—and that womanist ethics and theology are often constructed from surviving and thriving, and also often transmitted in story.¹ My understanding of Christian social ethics is that an integrated approach to psychological, social, and spiritual stories is required to achieve a methodology that emulates the whole-person liberation standards of the gospel.²

Now, my disclaimer. Although I am very interested in the ways the overlapping storylines of race, class, and gender affect identity development, for this talk I

¹ For Katie Cannon's treatment of narrating ethics, see *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* (New York: Continuum, 1995); and *Black Womanist Ethics* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

² Traci C. West, *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

am focusing most on racial/ethnic identity, primarily because of time but also because I agree with Thompson and Carter that race is the salient issue in American culture today.³

Based on several sources on race, Jones defined it, in part, as “a group of people who share biological factors that come to signify group membership and the social meaning such membership has in the society at large.”⁴ Race as a scientific construct has been widely questioned; scholars have noted that it is a social construct used to classify and oppress people.⁵ Ethnicity refers to connectedness based on commonalities, such as region, religion, or nationality.⁶ Race takes on ethnic meanings when members of that biological group have an evolved culture—specific ways of living to meet biological and psychosocial needs. In a racist culture, race has social and economic meanings. For the purposes of this talk and in most of my work, I am using the term racial/ethnic to emphasize the cultural and social meanings attributed to the construct of race in America.

Now, the bullet points. I think these kinds of markers help to focus us. And then I will go back and say some more about the core thesis, theoretically, and some practical implications I think this has for our ministries.

1. We are storied selves. Identity development is the process of finding one’s own narrative voice amidst the speech of, and in dialog with, others as we interpret and make meaning of identity stories. We have complex, multiple identities (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religious traditions, and belief systems). We can therefore think of identity as how these overlapping interweaving multitextured stories inform one another. Health might be thought of as narrating cohesive (rather than fragmented), authentic (rather than false), and verifiable (as opposed to self-deluded) storied selves.

2. *Call* can be thought of as learning to discern and hear the voice that is the story that God is writing with us and has written for us. Accepting our call means coauthoring that story with God and with our community. Helping our

³ Calmer E. Thompson and Robert T. Carter, eds., *Racial Identity Theory: Applications to Individual, Group, and Organizational Interventions* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), xvi.

⁴ James William Jones, “The Relational Self: Contemporary Psychoanalysis Reconsiders Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59 (1991): 119–35; James William Jones, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

⁵ Thompson and Carter, *Racial Identity Theory*.

⁶ Elaine Pinderhughes, *Understanding Race, Ethnicity, and Power: The Key to Efficacy in Clinical Practice* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

congregants to follow their calls to God's future and to ministry (the priesthood of all believers) is a task of leaders.

3. Howard Gardner says that leaders are those who tell stories that effectively wrestle with the stories that already populate the minds of others.⁷ I agree, and would add that the stories leaders tell are formed by their storied selves, and those stories help coauthor group identity or story. So, the vision leaders articulate is affected by their vision of themselves. Preaching is truth through personality; storying God's vision comes through our own stories.⁸ We need to be self-aware and self-critical, and we need to exercise care of the power we have to story others' lives. Our exegetical lenses need to turn toward ourselves with a critical analysis, so that our "stuff" does not impinge the gospel's transforming power.

4. Congregations are coauthoring a group identity and a group call, informed not only by the stories of leaders but also by members' stories and master stories (the biblical narratives and binding narratives, like "chosenness," vision, mission, etc.). Therefore, the preacher/leader is a griot who exegetes the stories of the congregation (living texts), the biblical stories, and cultural stories, and weaves them together, making meaning of them, re-forming them. The griot is a preacher/leader/artist who stories the vision of God's reign, by any means necessary and through all "languages" necessary. This is called *multivocality*.

5. The preacher/leader/artist has tools to use to create what Brian Blount calls a pocket of resistance in a culture antithetical to the gospel.⁹ I say we best rehearse the reign of God in culturally diverse settings. If we are to restory the cultural narrative(s) on race, gender, and class, our communities of faith need to reflect the Revelation 7:9 vision of many voices and tribes all together praising God. In that context, the whole worship experience should story the vision—hymns, music, ritual, poetry, dance, where people sit, who participates in worship, how children are treated—all of these are tools in the griot's bag. The tools help to tell the story in the diverse cultural languages of those gathered. The arts remind us that the Pentecost paradigm is about the miracle of speaking in diverse tongues so that the good news is heard.

⁷ Howard E. Gardner, *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).

⁸ Phillips Brooks, *The Joy of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989).

⁹ Brian Blount and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, eds., *Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

6. The preacher/leader/artist is the resident theologian and worship producer. She plans ahead, prepares the celebration, casts “artists,” sets a context, commissions the work, and coaches the participants. The preacher/leader/artist is the executive producer. The producer sets a budget, connects worship to the larger vision, communicates with and casts lay leaders and artists, evaluates, and carries lessons into the system. Leading diversity means purposeful planning of worship to be inclusive, non-elitist, multiracial, and multicultural expression of God’s shalom. Our aim is to further the vision of deeper connections to God and to one another so that diversity is not superficial but rather is transformative.

7. The preacher/leader/artist stories the multiracial/multicultural vision not only in worship but through education. Creating contexts for learning and for deeper relating as communities in order to generate a common storyline is the preacher/leader/artist’s job. Jesus’ ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing is our model for teaching the transformative vision through purposeful planning of courses and experiences that ignite learning in the spirit.

8. The preacher/leader/artist is a developer of other leaders. Artists, directors, teachers, liturgists, mentors, board members, and lay leaders all catch the vision and become bearers of the vision for a multiracial, multicultural, multiclass, gender- and sexual-orientation-diverse future. One-on-ones (story-sharing) and mentoring are critical to growing leaders in your system.

WE NEED TO TELL NEW STORIES

Howard Gardner, professor of cognition and education at Harvard, may be best known for his theory of multiple intelligences, a critique of the notion of a single intelligence that can be measured by standard psychometric instruments.¹⁰ Gardner, both a developmental psychologist and a neuropsychologist, has focused his work on leadership on the stories leaders.^{11,12}

In a study of eleven leaders, Gardner argues that the “ultimate impact of the leader depends most significantly on the particular story that he or she relates or embodies and the receptions to that story on the part of audiences (or collaborators or followers).” Gardner says further that the stories told are not headlines or

¹⁰ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

¹¹ Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

¹² Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 14.

snapshots, but “an unfolding drama in which they—leader and followers—are the principle characters or heroes.” Leaders tell stories that effectively wrestle with the stories already existing in the minds of others, and the most compelling stories are the ones that have to do with personal and group identity. Thus, effective leaders succeed in conveying a new version of a group’s story that “makes sense ... at a particular historical moment, in terms of where they have been and where they would like to go.”¹³

THE THEO-ETHICS OF THE BORDER: JESUS’ MESTIZO MODEL

Virgilio Elizondo, a Roman Catholic priest and professor of theology, passionately describes the ethics of life on the border of two cultures in *The Future Is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet*. Elizondo argues that *mestizaje*, the process through which peoples mix biologically and culturally, makes a new people, physically and socio-culturally. As Elizondo reminds us, Jesus’ life in Nazareth of Galilee meant constant border crossing; this made Jesus, culturally and linguistically, a mestizo, “assuming unto himself the great traditions that flourished in his home territory.”¹⁴ All kinds of people passed through this border town occupied by Roman soldiers. Encountering other cultures shaped Jesus’ identity, making Him—like Elizondo, Anzaldua, and our study leaders—a border person.¹⁵

What can we learn about border living from Jesus, the one who, as a Galilean, was mestizo and a border-crosser? One implication for the church is that “in His *Mestizo* existence Jesus breaks the barriers of separation, as does every *mestizo*, and already begins to live a new unity ... We usher in a new life for the betterment of everyone when we freely and consciously assume the great traditions flowing through our veins and transcend them, not by denying either but by

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Virgilio P. Elizondo, *The Future Is Mestizo: Life Where Cultures Meet* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000), 79.

¹⁵ Elizondo and others suggest that Jesus’ racial/ethnic identity was mestizo, or mixed, as well. See Cain H. Felder, *Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989); Cain H. Felder, C.H. (1989). Felder, C.H. (1993). “Recovering Multiculturalism in Scripture, in *The Original African Heritage Study Bible*, ed. Cain H. Felder (Nashville: James C. Winston Publishing Company, 1993); Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *Coming Together: The Bible’s Message in an Age of Diversity* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1995); Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ. Vol. 9 of The Bishop Henry McNeal Turner Studies in North American Black Religion* (New York: Orbis Books, 1994); R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Asian Faces of Jesus*. Faith and Cultures Series (New York: Orbis Books, 1993). For me, the multicultural/multi-racial identity of the historic Jesus is a liberating fact, just as important as his poor, humble beginnings. God used an unlikely agent to work God’s wonders in the world; it is a strategy that God has used repeatedly.

synthesizing them into something new . . . The *Mestizo* affirms both the identities received while offering something new to both.”¹⁶

Even if one does not embrace the racial/ethnic or cultural *mestizaje* of Jesus, the gospels tell stories of Jesus crossing cultic borders as well. His table fellowship was scandalous; he broke bread with sinners and tax collectors. He spoke to the unspeakable, he touched the untouchable.¹⁷ He challenged the cultic status quo.

Elizondo draws on his own storied self as he analyzes the parallels between the border crossing of Jesus and his own. Early school days in a German Catholic School in Texas were painful for young Virgilio. His language was barred, the food was strange, and he was lonely. Every day, he went to school feeling guilt and shame for being different. Reflecting on his experiences later, Elizondo writes, “As I look into the past and try to understand it from my present perspective many years later, I re-experience the original pain, sadness, embarrassment, ambiguity, frustration, and the sense of seeking refuge by being alone. Yet I can also see that it was already the beginning of the formation of the consciousness of a new existence—a new *mestizaje*. The daily border crossing was having its effect on me. I didn’t know what it meant. I didn’t even know why it had to be. But that constant crossing became the most ordinary thing in my life.”¹⁸

THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG

We all know the story:

In the beginning, God. Calling the world into existence,
creating for pure joy a people.

In the middle, people, searching and getting lost;
faithfulness and failures. False starts and false gods.

In the end, all of the people, from all tribes and nations, praising God in
one voice!

¹⁶ Elizondo, *The Future Is Mestizo*, 84.

¹⁷ For an excellent exegesis of Jesus as a border crosser in the Temple of Jerusalem, see Brian Blount’s essay “The Apocalypse of Worship: A House of Prayer for ALL the Nations,” in *Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship*, edited by Brian Blount and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 16–29.

¹⁸ Elizondo, *The Future Is Mestizo*, 17.

That is the story the Church is called to co-author. Right here, right now, on earth, as it is in heaven.

In the end, well, the end has not been written, but what carries across is God made us, God loves us, God keeps coming to show us who God is, even comes to be with us so we can really get it. God pursues us, we run; God pursues us again and again; God welcomes us home when we get tired of running, tired of resisting; and God is coming again to claim us. It is a fantastic story—it is our script for life, isn't it?

There is a text in our scripture about Nicodemus and Jesus and this whole idea of being *born again* or *born anew*. The words there have several meanings. Born again, born from above. Born or conceived; could be very confusing. But the *you* in the text is plural—not individual. I think Jesus was telling Nicodemus that his ideas of salvation need to be reconceived. I'm thinking about the story of race in America when I say this. Our notions of race, class, and gender need to be born again, or reconceived.

America needs to be restoried. Our country has been built on a story that is a lie—a story that is called racism. In that story some people are privileged. In that story some people are devalued. In that story housing patterns are based on race. In that story school budgets go along with housing. In that story congregations are segregated because housing patterns are segregated. In that story Martin Luther King's quote in 1965 that 11:00 Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour in America, in that story it's still true. In that story even congregational life is affected by race. In that story—which is a lie because there is only one race, which is the human race—fear and prejudice make us suspicious and fearful of one another. And we do not join our hearts and our minds together as one. And Jesus told Nicodemus we have to be reconceived. Race, gender, and class in America need to be reconceived.

I believe that the Church, and I mean all of the Church, is called to be the leader that restories race in America. The Church must proclaim God's justice that rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. I believe that we are the ones who are prophetically called to make sure that all of God's people—black, white, brown, and yellow, male and female, rich and poor—are able to envision the Reign of God.

In the story that is God's reign, there is newness in the way we love one another, in the way we make community together, in the way we practice together, hospitality, in the way that we willingly and joyfully benefit and bless one another.

And the way we wrestle together with the tough issues, and take time to hear one another, and be faithful to one another. And the way that we are baptized into one baptism, eat of one bread, and drink of one cup. We confess one name and are obedient to one Lord and one Spirit. And that's the Spirit that we heard yesterday is poured out into our hearts so that we can love one another.

Our notion of ministry, Jesus told Nicodemus, need to be reconceived, reimagined, reformed, and always reforming on the way to the future that is the Reign of God. We practice the Reign of God right here, right now. We practice in our congregations.

And so I end on a very practical note with three things I hope we can do, as we construct counternarratives about race, class and gender. First, we need to develop a border consciousness. What I mean by that is we need to develop in ourselves a kind of sense of "both/and," a "both/andness." In his seminal book, *The Souls of Black Folks*, W. E. B. Du Bois called this a double consciousness. He said that black people in America—he called them Negroes then, the term of the day—developed a sense of "twoness," the consciousness of the self and the consciousness of what the other thinks.¹⁹ And I'm not sure today if Du Bois meant that as a weakness, but I'm claiming it as a strength. The ability to be both/and, to think about what it means to be black, but also to imagine what you think it means for me to be black develops in me empathy and intuitiveness. What Du Bois calls double consciousness, a wonderful theologian Miguel A. de la Torre calls "multiple consciousness," because he, as a Latino theologian, knows that this stuff is not just about black and white.²⁰ Our Asian brothers and sisters in the room, our Latino/Latina brothers and sisters in the room will testify to that. So two is not enough, two doesn't get it. So de la Torre talks about multiple consciousness, a plural consciousness, and that's what I call multivocality, and I'm saying that's what we need on the border, *en la frontera*. *En la frontera* we need this multiple consciousness so that we can understand the other, and so that we can understand the otherness of *our* ourselves.

You, every one of us, has been disenfranchised at some point. We got left out, we got sat down, we got shut out, we went to a meeting and we didn't feel like our voice really mattered. Everybody was urban and we were country. We didn't get it; we didn't feel that we mattered. That sense of otherness is empathy, and

¹⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1903).

²⁰ Miguel A. de la Torre, *Reading the Bible from the Margins* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 27–30.

empathy means we will know one another, and deal with one another on an authentic level. We need to develop a border consciousness; Du Bois calls it double consciousness. Virgilio Elizondo, Chicano theologian, calls it *mestizaje*, the mixedness of it all. He says that the TexMex are developing *un tres raza*, a third race that is not Chicano and not white, but is blended. And he isn't talking about race blending; he's talking about consciousness blending. It's a wonderful concept. I say purposeful, passionate, prophetic leadership on the border will rehearse the Reign of God right here on Earth. We need to develop a border consciousness.

Second, we need to develop a border ethic, a border theology, a border hermeneutic, and border exegesis while we're doing our work in church. We need to develop the ability to read texts, and this is what I mean by text—not just the biblical text, which is so critical, but also the texts of the people in the midst of us—living texts. We need to be able to read those texts with a border hermeneutic, and we need to read the text that is our own self with a border hermeneutic. How am I like you? How am I distinct from you? We need to develop a border ethic, a border hermeneutic, a border theology, and the ability to do border exegesis. The Japanese call that borderiness *fu chi, fu chi*. So we want to be able to have a sense of what's going on in these texts, not just through our own lens, but from the lens of the other. In the Korean culture there's this thing called *Han*. *Han* is a kind of sorrow or disappointment. And it is not just an individual *Han*; there can be a collective *Han*. Korean culture believes that whenever there is injustice in the world, there is a collective *Han*. With a border ethic, when someone's hungry, our stomach is growling. When somebody down the street is heartbroken, our heart aches too. While there's still racial injustice in South Africa, we are conscious of the racial injustice in our midst. A border ethic pulls us together as family.

Third, I think we need to develop border leaders. We need prophetic, passionate, purposeful leaders to go back to our context and teach the gospel from the margin. We teach the gospel through different lenses. What does that look like, preacher? Well, we have to get some tools. We buy books and we read and understand that there are other theologies besides John Calvin. There is *mujerista* theology, *liberation* theology, *womanist* theology, *elephant* theology. I was talking to the seminarians last night and I was saying that we leaders in the congregations have to be lifelong students of what else is going on in the world so that those things can shape our preaching and our teaching, and our leadership development.

To read the Bible in Spanish, for example, is to give one different interpretations about the word *love*, and the word *God*. To read the Bible with a Spanish

understanding gives a person a different interpretation because of social location, and because of language. In order to know more fully who God is and what God is saying, we need other perspectives. So you subscribe to publications that give you other perspectives. You read literature that gives other perspectives. You make friends with one other person, and you read the lectionary with that person. What does that text say to you? And in the diversity and your own context, because—believe it—it's there. There are people from England, and there are people from Poland, and there are people whose ancestors are German in your own context. There's something called an Ethiopian Bible study. So you just read the text, and then you leave a space in silence. And you just ask your lay leaders, maybe those you're training, what does that text say to you? And as they speak from their own heart and their own conviction, you learn about how to story the gospel in their language. Because they're your tutors, and they're your mentors, and they're your teachers.

Our congregants, our students, our colleagues, our children are waiting for the words that affirm their flesh, for the words that make their flesh sing with affirmation and joy. May we construct those kinds of narratives, so that the particular flesh of all of God's people is celebrated, known to be awesomely and wonderfully made, healed and whole. ■

Essay

The First French *Institutes*: Calvin's Pastoral Voice

by Elsie Anne McKee

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How many people associate the word “pastoral” with John Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*? Even fewer than would use that word to describe Calvin himself. Although it could be argued that the Latin *Institutes* has more pastoral elements than is often thought, the focus of this essay is the way that the French reformer shaped his translation of the Latin text to serve an audience of lay Christians in his homeland. The first part introduces the 1541 French translation, and the main body of the essay examines how Calvin adapted his work to a lay audience. This will include both typical sorts of adaptations and attention to the character of the work.¹

It is common knowledge that Protestant reformers made a concerted effort to speak and write in a language that ordinary people could understand. Because most people today read Calvin’s *Institutes* in a translation, it is often forgotten that he actually wrote it in Latin, the normal medium for theology or other serious discourse in his day (as it had been for centuries). The thoughtful person,

¹ This essay is based on my translation of the 1541 *Institutes*: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1541 French Edition*, trans. Elsie Anne McKee (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009). The comparison is made with the reprinting of the 1539 Latin edition by Richard F. Wevers, *Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin 1539: Text and Concordance* (Grand Rapids: Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, 1983). Hereafter these will be noted as McKee 1541 with page number, or Wevers with chapter:paragraph:line. Ideally, the comparison would include also the critical edition of the French by Olivier Millet, but in view of the length of the text, this is cited only at specific points: Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne (1541)*, édition critique par Olivier Millet (Genève: Droz, 2008), hereafter cited as Millet with the page number.

however, will ask how the Latin origin of the *Institutes* fits with the Protestant determination to provide religious teaching to ordinary people, and whether perhaps this book was an exception to that purpose. The answer is that Calvin and other reformers often translated their scholarly works, or had them translated, into various vernaculars. (They might also translate the works of friends, as Calvin had an edition of Philip Melancthon's *Loci Communes/Common Places* published in French.)

Beginning with the second edition of the *Institutes* in 1539, Calvin himself translated each following edition of the Latin into French. The 1539 was published in French in 1541, 1543 in 1545, 1550 in 1551, and 1559 in 1560. Because Latin was the international language of theology, the Latin *Institutes* became the source of the translations into other vernaculars, including English, and thus Calvin's own French *Institutes* have largely been ignored by all except French Calvin specialists. (The one exception to this is students of French literature, because the first translation in 1541 came to be regarded as a foundational text for the modern French language. Even those who dislike—or detest!—his theology, are obliged to admire the elegance of his classical French style.²)

One of the consequences of the neglect of the French *Institutes* has been a corresponding myopia about the pastoral character of Calvin's writing. As mentioned above, discerning readers can see this pastoral orientation in the Latin *Institutes*, provided that they understand pastoral care in sixteenth-century Protestant terms as teaching that edifies, including comfort for assurance of salvation but also formation in faith and life. However, that is a subject for another occasion. The focus here is a more limited sense of "pastoral," that is, identifying how Calvin the Latin-writing theologian adapted his teaching to the comprehension of non-Latin speakers. In this connection, it is useful to remember that French, like some other early modern languages, did not have a well-developed vocabulary for serious theology.³ Furthermore, when Calvin began to publish his French *Institutes*, access to French Bibles was extremely limited; the first full New Testament translated from the original Greek had appeared less than ten years

² For a useful overview, see Francis Higman, "Calvin and the Art of Translation" (1970), in *Lire et découvrir. La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Genève: Droz, 1998), 371–89. For the most recent exposition of this, including the way that the French *Institutes* came to be regarded as the manifestation of the ideal French language, see Olivier Millet, "Die modernen Editionen der Institutio von 1541 (1911–2008), Vorgeschichte und kulturgeschichtliche Betrachtungen eine deutsch-französische Geschichte?" forthcoming in *Calvin und Calvinismus —Europäische Perspektiven*, ed. Irene Dingel and Herman Selderhuis.

³ See Francis Higman, "The Reformation and the French Language" (1976), in *Lire et découvrir. La circulation des idées au temps de la Réforme* (Genève: Droz, 1998), 337–51, here 341–42.

earlier, in 1535. Thus, not only could Calvin not assume that people knew the words he needed in order to express in French concepts which had been developed in Latin, but what they knew of scripture would be mostly oral and derived from the Vulgate.

It is also important to bear in mind that the curriculum for vernacular schools was different from and more limited than what was available in Latin. Not only did the students in the different schools learn to read and write in different languages, but while humanists studied Greek and Roman classics, popular schools tended to have practical concerns such as the Arabic numbers, which facilitated commerce. In addition, the number of people who could actually read was quite small by modern standards. On the other hand, it was customary to read aloud, so a much larger population could benefit from hearing a text such as the *Institutes* read by a literate member of the family or village or community.⁴

This discussion of how Calvin adapted his Latin *Institutes* to a French-language audience is based on a comparison between the 1539 Latin and its 1541 translation. The comparison is not exhaustive; I did not make a line-by-line study. This is the fruit of more focused comparisons of specific points or passages, carried out in the course of translating the French text into English.⁵ Therefore, though the types of differences between the Latin and the French are clear, I make no claim that the proportions of my examples are exact or even that every possible comparison is included.

Before turning to specific differences, however, it is important to have some idea of what these two texts have in common. One aspect of this is how they are alike in being distinct from the earlier and later editions of the *Institutes*. Most obviously, the 1539 Latin and the 1541 French were the same text of seventeen chapters, triple the size of the first little book published in 1536. This 1539 edition included the single largest increase of new material and the most significant rearrangement before 1559. This edition of the *Institutes* was also distinctive for the fluency and coherence of its style. The preparation of a new edition of the *Institutes* was not a simple matter of cut and paste. Normally Calvin made minor modifications, most often simply to smooth transitions, but at times he also altered details or even occasionally interpretations. (In 1543, the next Latin edition after 1539, he recast a number of sections so that their formulation was

⁴ The idea that Calvin was thinking of auditors is supported by the way that the French substitutes an address to “my friends” (McKee 1541, 270) for the Latin *amice lector* (Wevers, 4:63:11).

⁵ A full presentation of all the evidence will appear elsewhere. Here the purpose is to provide examples of specific observations.

significantly different from before.) However, because he was writing so much of the book for the first time in 1539, the consistency of Calvin's style is impressive—perhaps greater than he ever achieved again for the *Institutes* as a whole (given that later there was inevitably some unevenness as the book underwent successive levels of revision).

Another distinctive feature of the 1539 edition, which is more significant for present purposes, is that it was the first to be published after Calvin gained some pastoral experience. The 1536 *Institutes* had been written by a gifted young scholar who had no idea of becoming a pastor, but before the 1539 Latin and especially before the 1541 French editions appeared, Calvin had been a pastor in two rather different contexts. One was the newly Protestant Geneva where, although the city had voted to follow the gospel, a considerable number of the people did not have a deep investment in or knowledge of the new teaching of the Bible; the other was the congregation of French-speaking religious refugees in German-speaking Strasbourg, who had paid the heavy price of exile in order to be able to worship in the new way. Perhaps his determination to produce the French translation is partly owed to Calvin's Strasbourg flock; although most of the actual changes from 1539 to 1541 appear to be shaped primarily by the different mental worlds that could be expected of Latin-educated and vernacular-educated audiences, some (especially on infant baptism) may have reflected what he learned from his parishioners.⁶

Although the first and second editions of the *Institutes* were written in Latin, the first had a catechetical character, whereas the second was more of a theological textbook. In 1536 Calvin's purpose had been to express the basic Christian faith of French believers ("Protestants") as an apologia to King Francis I and the international audience to whom Calvin was appealing on behalf of these persecuted French Protestants. Some time after this first Latin publication he had begun to translate the *Institutes* into French but did not complete this translation—probably because he was busy with pastoral work and because, more practically, he had also written a shorter catechism, in French, for Geneva.⁷ By 1539, though, Calvin was looking toward the task of teaching new pastors for the reformed church, so the new Latin was reoriented in that direction. It might seem that this would make the *Institutes* less useful for a vernacular audience. However, it should be remembered that when Calvin was first translating the

⁶ See below at nn. 40ff.

⁷ See Millet's critical edition for a full introduction to the translation, including references to paragraphs translated directly from the 1536 before the minor revisions of those passages were made in 1539.

Institutes, there were very few trained pastors and no organized churches in his beloved France, and most leaders of these new followers of the gospel would need their theology available in French if they were to make any real use of it. Perhaps Calvin's refugee congregation in Strasbourg served to help him grasp the educational level of lay leaders among the French Protestants: people who understood the new teaching well enough to have rejected the traditional church in which they had grown up but who were unable to articulate clearly their reasons or defend what they affirmed instead.

Calvin's Latin and French *Institutes* were essentially the same book. However, in many details they were explicitly directed to two different audiences. Thus, though the theology was the same, the presentation had a number of small differences that demonstrate that Calvin was in fact consciously trying to make the original elite version reasonably accessible to ordinary people; in other words, the humanist theologian was acting as a parish pastor. Although this general statement holds true for all Latin and French editions, the evidence here is based on 1539 and 1541. Before exploring the different texts that Calvin presented to the international scholarly world and to his own people at home in France, it is useful to look at how he identifies his audiences.

In fact, this leads to a very interesting observation about gender issues! Calvin distinguishes references to the human race from those to men as a sex. This is essentially a function of the Latin text, but it has a curious analogue in the French. The Latin normally refers to human beings with the word *homo*, equivalent to the Greek *anthropos*, and uses *vir*, meaning a male person, in much the same way that Greek uses *aner*, *andros*. The Latin of 1539 counts 1,017 instances of forms of *homo* and only about thirty-four to forty of *vir*.⁸ The French has no equivalent distinction between human being and male person, and thus the word *homme* stands for both. The curious thing, however, is that where Calvin employs *vir* in Latin, he usually does not use *homme* in French unless he is citing a Biblical verse that has the equivalent of *vir*!⁹ Most often the French parallel for *vir* is "personnage," though it can also be one of several other words or phrases, including proper names, a change of persons (from "men" to "we") or a generic word such as "each one" or "the wicked."¹⁰

⁸ See Wevers, *Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin 1539. Text and Concordance. Volume I: Text and Indices*. "Lemma Frequency Index," 21, 51.

⁹ For example, 7,000 men in 1 Kings 19:18 (OS 3, 24, line 14; Millet, 156; McKee 1541, 17). John 1:13 (Wevers 2:15:32; Millet, 298; McKee 1541, 71).

¹⁰ Letter to Francis I, *illi viri* (OS 3, 18, line 5) becomes *sainctz personages* (Millet, 159; McKee 1541, 13). *Vir* is substituted for Augustine and French has *personnage* (Wevers 6:25:62; Millet, 895; McKee 1541, 354). *Viri* for Noah, Daniel, and Job where French has *per-*

What is pertinent here is that Calvin clearly thinks of his Latin readers as men, but he just as plainly includes all the faithful among those he addresses in French. The phrase “good and truly studious men” (*boni viri et veri studiosi*) of 1539 becomes “those who fear God and are zealous for truth” in 1541; the Latin says that opponents of the new teaching are vexing “orthodox and devout men” (*orthodoxos ac pios viros*), whereas the French calls the victims “the faithful.”¹¹ It is clear, then, that whereas the Latin *Institutes* was addressed to scholars whom Calvin assumed would be male, the French *Institutes* was consciously directed to the faithful who would include both men and women.

How, then, did Calvin (re)shape and adapt his 1539 *Institutes* when he published the first French edition in 1541? This essay first gives the obvious differences between the Latin and the French, and then a series of more subtle and far more numerous changes. The types of alterations are arranged by general categories, including accommodation to different kinds and levels of knowledge in the French audience, and accommodation to different social and cultural as well as religious sensibilities.

The relatively few formal changes between 1539 and 1541 may in fact be the result of trying to fit the book to the French lay audience. For example, although the content is essentially the same as the 1539 Latin, the title used for the 1541 French comes from the first 1536 edition: “*Instruction in the Christian Religion, in which is comprised a summary of piety and almost all that it is necessary to know about the doctrine of salvation.*” This is clearly more pastorally oriented than the 1539 Latin name: “*Institutes of the Christian Religion, at length truly corresponding to its title*” (i.e., the reference to being a sum of piety is omitted, but Calvin affirms that now the book really fulfills its claim to be a complete theology).¹² Second, the order of the chapters in the last third of the book is altered in French so that the chapter “on the five other ceremonies falsely called sacraments, that is, confirmation, penance, extreme unction, ecclesiastical orders, and marriage” (which Protestants considered invented by Rome) comes

sonnages (Wevers 9:9:44; Millet, 1155; McKee 1541, 470); other Biblical characters (Wevers 15:2:27; Millet, 1588; McKee 1541, 659). *Sanctus illi vir* becomes *Nectarius, homme renommé de sainteté et grande doctrine* (Wevers 5:21:26; Millet, 751; McKee 1541, 285). *Vir pius* becomes *nous* (Wevers 8:19:81; Millet, 1109; McKee 1541, 452). Sometimes the male emphasis is removed from a quotation and *vir* becomes *menteurs, mechants, iniques*, e.g., Ps. 26:4 & 9 (Wevers 6:35:8–9; Millet, 929; McKee 1541, 372). In 1 Cor. 12:28 senate *gravium virorum* becomes *assemblee des anciens* (Wevers 15:2:20; Millet, 1587; McKee 1541, 659).

¹¹ Wevers 14:7:6–7; Millet, 1528; McKee 1541, 636. Wevers 4:21:4; Millet, 567; McKee 1541, 199.

¹² *Christianae Religionis Institutio totam fere pietatis summam et quidquid est in doctrina salutis cognitu necessarium complectens, omnibus pietatis studiosis lectu dignissimum opus ac recens editum* (1536). *Institutio Christianae Religionis nunc vere demum suo titulo respondens* (1539).

immediately after the chapters that explain baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two sacraments that Protestants affirmed as given by Christ. The Latin had put this chapter much later in the sequence,¹³ but Calvin apparently thought that new believers, living in a context where all seven of the traditional sacraments were constantly in practice around them, would find it easier to have the whole discussion of sacraments together. Those are the formal, easily visible changes, but they are far from being the total.

The majority of Calvin's more subtle changes in the 1541 *Institutes* are various ways of adapting the text to a French-speaking audience. Some of the changes are related to differences in kinds and extent of education among vernacular readers, others to differences of religious culture and sensibility among laity, and still others to the differences between the more highly inflected Latin and the more conversational French language. Some alterations were also probably owed to Calvin's slightly different roles with the two audiences, as the Latin teacher could be somewhat more reserved, while the French pastor exercised a ministry of exhortation as well as instruction.

What are perhaps the most obvious changes are Calvin's accommodations to a French audience, which would have a rather different educational background than he could presuppose for Latin university-educated men. This is especially visible in substitutions for classical references. Because the curriculum for a vernacular school would not include the sources that Calvin the humanist took for granted in his own circle, many of the allusions with which he had seasoned his Latin text would be useless or confusing for a lay audience. The simplest form of accommodation to this ignorance was to insert brief explanatory words to identify persons from antiquity. The French text adds the words "Roman emperor" or "philosopher" or "heretic" or "bishop" or some other noun, where the Latin merely gives the names. Thus, Caligula becomes "Caligula, a Roman emperor," Seneca becomes "Seneca, a pagan philosopher," the Anomeans have "a sect of heretics" added to their name, and Eucherius has "bishop of Lyons" added to his.¹⁴ Sometimes the Latin makes an allusion that would be obvious to a learned audience without giving a name and the French supplies a fuller identification: the Latin "that rhetorician" becomes "Demosthenes, a Greek orator," the Latin "that holy man" becomes "Nectarius, of whom we have spoken above." At other times, a generic term is substituted for the name given in Latin: Solon becomes "legislators."¹⁵ Occasionally, this technique is applied to

¹³ Chap. 13 in French, chap. 16 in Latin.

¹⁴ Wevers 1:2:35, 17:13:18, 4:21:23, 2:11:16; McKee 1541, 26, 696, 200, 64.

¹⁵ Wevers 2:12:34, 5:21:26, 14:1:17; McKee 1541, 66, 293, 628.

Biblical figures, for example, the French calls Hannah “the mother of Samuel,” evidence that Calvin did not expect his readers to know all the characters of less familiar Bible stories, either.¹⁶

Calvin appears to think some names are common knowledge, for example, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. At other times, a figure is cited by name in the translation with no more identification than is given in the Latin—Solon, Cato, Catiline and Camillus, Helen, Lactantius and Eusebius, Laurentius Valla, Basil the Great, and Isidore¹⁷—perhaps because the context made it clear, perhaps because some names would be familiar from popular stories (e.g., Helen of Troy), perhaps simply because Calvin was not always watching carefully to be sure he gave his French readers the usual clues.

Another way Calvin helps his less educated readers is by dropping or altering classical allusions or examples. Sometimes he substitutes a common term or proverb; a much longer classical comparison of Attilius Regulus and Augustus Ceasar becomes a simple story about the difference between a person in prison and one who rules the earth; “synecdochae” becomes “a part for the whole”; “hellebore” becomes “medicine”; a learned allusion to words by Plautus (who is not actually named) becomes in French a simplified summary: to “seek what is not there.”¹⁸ At other times, the French text may entirely omit the classical reference, for example, a Ciceronian proverb.¹⁹ Here there are also occasional examples of a simplification in scriptural references; where the Latin gives names for those who made the tabernacle in the wilderness, the French just refers to them as “gifted by the Holy Spirit” for the task.²⁰

Sometimes a classical comment in the Latin will be extensively rewritten for the French audience; for example, an illustration of cultural differences seen in Greek palliates and Roman togas is summarized as “clothing” and a local example of the heraldry of French and English banners is inserted: “They add metaphors to make their saying more clear and plain, as: in war one distinguishes the French and the English from each other by the fact that the French wear a white cross and the English a red cross, as also the Romans were distinguished from the Greeks by the difference of their clothing.”²¹ The idea contained in a

¹⁶ Wevers 9:19:26; McKee 1541, 477.

¹⁷ Millet, 1595, 1712, 317, 1391, 424, 200, 1057, 1440; McKee 1541, 663, 710, 81, 576, 132, 426, 446, 598.

¹⁸ Wevers 2:24:163–66, 3:6:6, 5:26:13, 16:8:8. McKee 1541, 99, 121, 298, 592.

¹⁹ Wevers 5:22:1–2; McKee 1541, 293.

²⁰ Wevers 2:14:74; McKee 1541, 70.

²¹ Wevers 10:9:8–9; McKee 1541, 502.

classical example may be included (e.g., a discussion of ephors, tribunes, and demarches), but the French is significantly shorn of a number of details and potentially explosive ideas such as resistance to kings, and simply retains the point about magistrates who function as “defenders of the people.”²²

At other times, Calvin adds to the French explanations that would be unnecessary for university-educated men. For example, he inserts a definition of monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy, though in the Latin he discusses only the weaknesses of each form of government; or he explains “anthropomorphites” as “those who imagine a physical God.”²³ In Latin he refers to Plato’s idea of the soul remembering, but in French he adds that this means “what the soul knew before it was put in the body.”²⁴

Some religious language characteristic of humanists is dropped or altered. For example, Calvin can use the exclamation “*Deus bone*” in Latin, but that disappears in French. An allusion to Cicero’s words about “the gods” becomes “God” in French, a reference to the tripod of the Delphic oracle drops out completely and another use of “oracle” is changed to “the testimony which Moses claims.”²⁵ Partly this pattern of changes is an accommodation to ignorance, partly it appears to be an accommodation to “the weak” in faith who would be at least puzzled by such pagan echoes and at worst might be made to stumble and turn from the gospel. However, before pursuing more specifically questions of theological changes in the 1541 *Institutes*, it is appropriate to examine further the alterations related to correcting ignorance and facilitating communication.

Rather naturally, the number of Greek citations of scriptural words is greatly reduced in the French. Most of the time the idea is given without any reference to the Greek, but sometimes Calvin seems to consider a particular word or concept either sufficiently important or sufficiently comprehensible to be named and explained. “When St. Paul mentions the redemption done by Him, he commonly calls it in Greek *apolytrosis* (Rom. 3[24]; 1 Cor. 1[30]; Eph. 1[7]; Col. 1[14]), which signifies not simply redemption as the common language understands it, but the price and satisfaction that we call *ransom* in French.”²⁶

²² Wevers 15:17:29–32; McKee 1541, 680.

²³ Wevers 15:4:29; McKee 1541, 651. Wevers 3:11:67; McKee 1541, 132.

²⁴ Wevers 2:14:37; McKee 1541, 69.

²⁵ Wevers 11:25:9, 2:14:68, 8:5:67; McKee 1541, 541, 69, 422. Omission of Delphic oracle, Wevers 16:6:10; McKee 1541, 589.

²⁶ Wevers 5:32:69–71; McKee 1541, 305; cf. Wevers 10:2:11; McKee 1541, 496. More common is the practice of replacing a Greek word (e.g., *ephemeron*) with an explanation (“lives one day”); Wevers 17:19:59; McKee 1541, 704; cf. Wevers 10:3:12; McKee 1541, 497.

Here the Latin does not use the word “ransom” and it also gives another Greek word, *antilutron* [1 Tim. 2:6], but the French goes on to convey the sense without further reference to the Greek. In the Latin text, citations of Greek are more common than Hebrew and so it is not surprising that the same proportions are maintained in the French, though in much reduced form. References to a Hebrew word are extremely rare in the translation; once the word *Elohim* is used but in the other place where the Latin discusses that term the French merely says “a Hebrew word.” The Latin discussion of “messiah” (*meschiae*) is given in French as “God’s anointed,” and “Christ” is explained the same way.²⁷ On several occasions, in both the Latin and the French, there are critical remarks about the Vulgate, but the Latin usually does not bother to identify it, whereas the French calls it “the common translation.”²⁸

While comments on biblical languages are rare, Calvin frequently adds brief explanatory words for specific texts. These can be simply to clarify: for example, in 2 Cor. 1:20, where Paul says the promises are “‘amen’ in Christ,” he adds “that is, they are ratified in Him”; or explains Hosea 14:2: “‘the sacrifices of our lips’: that is the satisfaction which is only thanksgiving”; or inserts a note of explanation about practices in Genesis (6:18, 9:8–17, 17:2): “The ancients, in order to confirm their agreements, had the custom of killing a sow.”²⁹ Naturally, the explanations are frequently a theological interpretation. In 2 Cor. 5:19, where the Latin says “the one who was pure and clean of sin was made sin for us,” the French adds “that is, was made the Sacrifice onto whom all our sins were transferred”; in Eph. 5:26 the phrase “word of life” is explained “which is the gospel”; in Rom. 12:6 the Latin says “all scripture ought to be measured according to the proportion and likeness of faith,” and the French inserts “which always has regard to the promises.”³⁰ Similarly, brief insertions are a common way to clarify theological topics. For example, Calvin explains “the difference between excommunication and execration, which the ecclesiastical doctors call ‘anathema,’” or defines “indifferent things, which are not, in themselves, either good or bad.”³¹

Sometimes these additions are less for information than for ease in following the thought: a Biblical speaker is named before a quotation which the Latin does

²⁷ Wevers 4:24:3, 1:12:35, 15:72-73; McKee 1541, 203, 45, 678.

²⁸ Both refer to “common translation” [Vulgate] as being inaccurate: Wevers 4:4:26–27; McKee 1541, 202. Latin omits but French says “common translation”: Wevers 2:20:164–65; McKee 1541, 88.

²⁹ Wevers 4:11:3, 5:32:84, 10:3:2–3; McKee 1541, 187, 306, 496.

³⁰ Wevers 6:5:23, 11:1:21–22, 11:14:13; McKee 1541, 325, 511, 523.

³¹ Wevers 4:53:71, 13:9:1–2; McKee 1541, 253, 626.

not bother to introduce, or other figures are identified. Some examples include: “whom St. Luke mentions,” “thus says Jeremiah,” “by Moses,” “according to the prophet,” “David says.”³² Frequently the clarification is a kind of reinforcement of a theological concept by filling out something implicit in the Latin. For example, the Latin says “But possibly there are those who will indeed concede that human will is converted only to good by God’s power,” whereas the French explains good as “righteousness and uprightness.” The Latin refers to “the sinner, declining in the ability to distinguish good and evil,” which the French completes “which he has in his heart.”³³

A particularly helpful aspect of this category of clarifying additions is the way that the French often replaces Latin pronouns or the implied subjects found in the endings of verbs with nouns or even phrases. For example, French says “our Pharisees,” or in another place, “these good people of whom we have spoken,” where the Latin has the subject implicit in the verb, or the Latin pronoun “*isti*” (these) becomes in French “the dreamers against whom we speak.”³⁴ This is partly a function of the difference between the highly inflected Latin language and the much less tight grammar of French, but it is also almost certainly a function of Calvin’s awareness that his vernacular text was more likely to be read aloud. For auditors, having subjects named frequently would be an important factor in keeping the argument straight. Another demonstration of this principle is the way that Calvin introduces opponents and especially puzzled would-be believers into the conversation. Often the questions are implied or indirectly suggested in the Latin, but the French takes this a step further, and at least several times it inserts, “But someone will object” or “someone will ask.”³⁵ The flow of the Latin is made more accessible by this emphasis on dialogue in the French.

Often the additions provide a pastoral kind of reflection or exhortation or safeguards for distinguishing good teaching from traditional misinterpretations. When discussing the situation of the elect before their calling, he adds: “As it sometimes happens that our Lord does not reveal Himself at first to His faithful but allows them to walk for some time in ignorance before He calls them.” To believers worrying about family members who had not converted to the gospel, this would be very comforting. With reference to the instruction in Gal. 6:10 to pray for the household of faith, Calvin inserts a helpful comment on that vexed question of who should be included here: “These are those whom we

³² Wevers 4:12:40, 5:32:35, 6:32:33, 6:32:34, 6:35:2; McKee 1541, 189, 304, 366 (bis), 372.

³³ Wevers 2:20:25, 2:16:26; McKee 1541, 84, 74,

³⁴ Wevers 6:42:1, 8:2:20, 7:5:1; McKee 1541, 380, 416, 395.

³⁵ Wevers 2:24:83–88, 3:24:49–50, 17:21:12, 8:13:14; 6:32:21; McKee 1541, 102, 161, 706, 435, 365.

know, inasmuch as we can judge, are presently the true faithful and servants of God.”³⁶ Here there is no absolute identification of elect and no statement about the future, but simply a practical guide “inasmuch as we can judge” for the present. In discussing the sacraments, Calvin is not satisfied with the Latin word “signs” but adds in French “or sacraments which the Lord left and commanded to His church,” to reinforce for his lay audience the definition of true sacraments as only established by God by explicit command, lest they be confused by the traditional teaching on things like extreme unction based on James 5.³⁷

At times the additions also give concrete examples to illumine the application of scripture, as when Calvin explains how rulers can exercise judgment without breaking the sixth commandment: “Just as when a prince forbids all his subjects to carry an offensive weapon or wound anyone, he nevertheless does not prevent his officers from executing the justice which he had particularly committed to them.”³⁸ At other times, the additional words can function to help the reader make logical connections by indicating the movement of the argument or repeating words or phrases: “We can explain this with metaphors,” “As I have said, concerning the second article,” or “I concede that it would be desirable for it to be otherwise.”³⁹

The most extensive additions to the French are related to the sacraments. Rather naturally, many of these are polemical. The comments on baptism show Calvin’s concern to make a defense on two fronts, against the Anabaptists and against the traditional church. For example, referring to the Anabaptists, the Latin says, “They mock the ordinance which the Lord made for circumcision,” and the French adds, “which is of the same value and consideration” [as baptism]. Discussing the differences between baptizing adults and infants, Calvin adds to the French, “That this is so is not something we invent as our own mind pleases but we have certain assurance from scripture to make such a distinction.”⁴⁰ Referring to Rome, the Latin says that the water of baptism is “disdained and contaminated” by comparison with the oil (used in traditional anointing) and the French inserts sharply that the water “is God’s sign” (over against the human ceremony of oil). Other additions help the scattered French believers guard against other traditional errors, such as withholding the cup from the laity.⁴¹ Given the importance of penance and absolution in medieval piety, it is not surprising that

³⁶ Wevers 3:29:22, 9:24:23; McKee 1541, 170, 481.

³⁷ Wevers 11:12:2; McKee 1541, 521.

³⁸ Wevers 15:6:12; McKee 1541, 663.

³⁹ Wevers 2:15:11, 2:15:16, 4:4:60–61; McKee 1541, 71 (bis), 249.

⁴⁰ Wevers 11:17:5–6, 11:23:50; McKee 1541, 526, 538.

⁴¹ Wevers 16:6:38–39, 12:25:40; McKee 1541, 590, 570.

Calvin adds a complete sentence on this point. “For as we have declared sufficiently above, the promise of the keys does not at all pertain to creating some special state of absolution, but only to the preaching of the gospel, whether it is proclaimed to one person or a number. That is, by this promise (in Matt. 16:19, 18:18) our Lord does not establish a special absolution which is made individually to each one but one which is made to all sinners without distinction and as a whole.”⁴²

While maintaining the order of this essay in moving from classical and biblical to theological and polemical issues, it is appropriate to insert a short excursus here on the extent of the additions made to the chapter on baptism. In sheer volume these are significantly greater than those for any other chapter in the book, and many of them are discussions of biblical texts. One section explaining Rom. 1:3, Gal. 3:16, Heb. 2:16 & 4:15 does not appear in the 1539 and then drops out of the French itself after 1541.⁴³

Much the longest addition is a discussion of Acts 19:4–5, where Paul (re)baptizes the disciples who had not heard of the Holy Spirit. Calvin had already explained the same passage earlier in the chapter on baptism, and this repetition is dropped from later editions of the French.⁴⁴ The understanding of Acts 19 does not differ in the two passages, but the application is slightly but perhaps significantly different. The first time Calvin uses the text (the explanation which is in both Latin and French) the point is rebaptism, that is, his Anabaptist opponents claim Paul’s rebaptism of the disciples as legitimation for their own adult baptisms, discounting the rite applied to them as infants on the grounds of their ignorance of true teaching. Calvin responds that the meaning is that Paul laid hands on the people previously baptized in water, now giving them the baptism of the Holy Spirit such as happened on Pentecost. When Acts 19 is discussed the second time, only in the 1541 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin focuses on the issue of the ignorance of the infants being baptized, reiterating his earlier point about the need for daily rebaptism if the problem were ignorance: “Every one of us would have to have a river to be rebaptized, for who is there among us who does not recognize day by day great and weighty ignorance in himself? For every such acknowledgement he would have to run to a new baptism.” The later elimination of this section does not shortchange Calvin’s argument, but it is interesting to observe that precisely in 1541 he thought it was worth repeating this explanation to emphasize that the ignorance of infants per se should not hinder their baptism.

⁴² Wevers 16:8:53; McKee 1541, 593.

⁴³ Wevers 11:20:46, 11; McKee, 534.

⁴⁴ Wevers 11:10:43–78, 11:25:60–61; McKee 1541, 519, 542–43.

The French chapter on baptism is also the locus of some of the longest passages, which are different formulations of the Latin. Particularly important is a discussion on how to read and interpret scripture and then how to understand the relationship of external and internal, sign and reality. Scattered through the rest of the text are a number of shorter reformulations, which sometimes expand, sometimes simplify the Latin. At some points the order of the material is different in the two languages, as in an exposition of 1 Pet. 3:21.⁴⁵ The editors of the *Opera Selecta* conjecture that the differences between the 1539 Latin and the 1541 French on the subject of infant baptism may stem from Calvin's having originally conceived this section as an independent treatise directed against Anabaptists with whom he was in considerable debate during his ministry in Strasbourg. Beyond the circumstantial observation that Calvin was much engaged with Anabaptists, the only concrete evidence they cite (which they recognize should not be overestimated) is not borne out by a more extensive examination of the French. (They refer to the use of the word "traicté" in the chapter on infant baptism, but they do not recognize that Calvin regularly uses this word to refer to the different topics or chapters of the book.⁴⁶) Olivier Millet, in his critical edition of the 1541 *Institutes*, indicates that he also has doubts about this view of the *Opera Selecta* editors and considers the chapter a translation, even though at times it is loose.⁴⁷ Here it suffices to note what it signifies about Calvin's sense that French evangelicals particularly needed pastoral counsel on the biblical arguments for infant baptism in light of the ways that simple readers might be led astray by the more literalist Anabaptist interpretation of the New Testament and *sola scriptura*.

Having given a great deal of attention to additions to the French, it is also appropriate to note that besides adding explanatory words and phrases to his translation, Calvin also does the reverse. Not infrequently Latin words disappear from the French, and occasionally a whole sentence is dropped. Many instances seem to be related to finer points of teaching that Calvin did not consider essential for his French audience. As noted above, frequently the omissions are classical allusions.⁴⁸ One notable theological omission is a long polemical sentence citing Gen. 1:26 in an argument about using this text to support the doctrine of the trin-

⁴⁵ Wevers 11:22:35–47; McKee 1541, 540.

⁴⁶ OS 5, 303–304 n. i. This refers to *traicté* as it appears in Millet, chap. 11, 1315, but see same usage in Millet, chap. 2, 284, 347, 365; chap. 4, 521, 549; chap. 6, 905; chap. 7, 966; chap. 15, 1543. (Chap. 13, 1447 is a rare instance of "*chapitre*" as equivalent to the more common "*traicté*.")

⁴⁷ Millet's view of this is similar, cf. 1270–71 n.54. "Pour notre part, nous constatons que le texte de 1541 est bien, dans l'ensemble, soit une traduction, soit un aménagement de celui de 1539, et que les concordances restent nombreuses."

⁴⁸ See above nn.14ff.

ity.⁴⁹ Certainly Calvin teaches the trinity in the French translation, but apparently he decided that this particular piece of evidence would be more confusing than helpful. (A very unscientific sample says that omitting words from the French may be less common than adding them, but that would need to be examined.)

Calvin's pastoral adapting of the *Institutes* for a vernacular audience involves even more subtle changes of several kinds. Not infrequently his French rendition of a Latin phrase or sentence is more of a paraphrase than an exact translation. Sometimes the words are simply more lively or polemical, as when the French says, "Madmen find mystery in the law," while the Latin says, "These people (*isti*) philosophize about the word law," or the French says "synagogues of Turks" instead of the Latin "conventicles of Turks."⁵⁰ Sometimes the phrasing may be more relevant to a lay audience: "condemn as wicked" rather than "denounce as anathema," or calling the judges who passed sentence on Christ a "consistory." Not infrequently the alteration expands the Latin, as when the brief reference to the value of works a "posteriori" becomes "when they are taken as a sign of God's calling."⁵¹

At other times, the French formulation gives a slightly different and usually simplified form. At times the purpose was apparently an effort to find more concrete or specific words: for example, where the Latin says "in a purer age," the French has "in the early church," or where the Latin refers to "the mysteries," or "mystical bread," the French has "Sabbath" or "celebrate the sacraments."⁵² Sometimes the differences suggest that Calvin is using words or concepts that will be familiar or unambiguous; for example, instead of the "*substantia*" of the soul, the French says "immortality," instead of the "body of Christ," the French says "the company of the faithful."⁵³ Calvin also seems to avoid complexity that he considers unnecessary for lay people, where the difficulty of understanding would outweigh the benefit of the elaboration. (This fits with his explicit purpose of instructing the teachable but not including all that could be said on a topic.) For example, in describing the apostolic practice of baptism, the Latin says that they did not baptize anyone who had not already professed faith and repentance, but the French simply says they baptized "only adults."⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Wevers 4:13:44-49; McKee 1541, 215.

⁵⁰ Wevers 3:25:62, 4:54:61; McKee 1541, 163, 256.

⁵¹ Wevers 3:27:41, 3:18:19, 6:21:30; McKee 1541, 165, 148, 348.

⁵² Wevers 3:7:46, 3:15:29, 3:16:3-4; McKee 1541, 124, 141, 145.

⁵³ Wevers 7:6:82, 8:15:90; McKee 1541, 402, 443.

⁵⁴ Wevers 11:23:2, 4:21:6; McKee 1541, 537, 199.

At other times it is possible Calvin's reformulation of the idea when it was translated into French was an effort to avoid specific theological problems or misinterpretations, as when he reduces Cornelius's "alms and prayers" in Acts 10:2 to simply "prayers," or changes Abraham's "prostitution" of Sarah to "abandonment." Sometimes the change is not easily explained, as when "catechumens" in Latin becomes "unbelievers" in French⁵⁵; perhaps Calvin thought that the word "catechumen" would be confusing to his auditors, who would have no precedent for it in their traditional religious experience—or perhaps he did not want to stop to explain the early church practice of catechesis and barring those who had not made a profession of faith from participation in the sacraments.

Other forms of theological simplification are also visible in the ways that the French slightly but significantly reshapes the Latin. Some of the language about the Old Testament and Israel is expressed with a more traditional Christian flavor. This is evident in translations of Biblical passages, where, for example, "Jehovah" is regularly replaced with other, more familiar names for God, such as "Lord," "the Eternal," or "God" meaning Jesus Christ.⁵⁶ Theologically, Calvin clearly regards Israel as the form of the church in the Old Testament, but in the Latin text his language usually maintains a distinction between the two dispensations, whereas the French tends to assimilate Israel to the Christian church. Some of the theological shaping of the translation gives particular attention to points that are significant to Protestants, as if Calvin thought these should be emphasized when writing to people surrounded by the traditional church. One signal for this is the addition of references to the Bible and preaching, which are not always explicit in the Latin; for example, once where the Latin says "sacraments," the French gives "word and sacraments."⁵⁷

Another expression of this religious shaping of the text is the way the French intensifies emotion or the contrast of good and evil. Whether he is adding a phrase to emphasize the fallacy of free will ("if people have any"), or to cast scorn on a claim ("which shows their great stupidity"), or to heighten a contrast (an "impossible" condition), Calvin's French has an emotional energy not evident in the Latin.⁵⁸ He adds references to God or Christ on the one hand, or the devil, on the other, to give a sense of the real difference between allegiances or the true extent of impiety. For example, the Latin asks "with what confidence will we be armed" and the French adds "against the devil." The Latin says the

⁵⁵ Wevers 8:14:15, 7:4:25, 16:15:5; McKee 1541, 438, 392, 601.

⁵⁶ Wevers 3:12:33, 4:24:19 & 29 & 34, 3:8:2 & 12, 4:26:48 & 49 & 50; McKee 1541, 133, 203–204, 125, 207.

⁵⁷ Wevers 6:13:3; McKee 1541, 335.

⁵⁸ Wevers 2:17:1, 4:15:10, 2:28:14–15; McKee 1541, 76, 191, 109.

scholastic idea of venial sin includes “hidden impiety,” but the French says “hidden impiety against God!” and then later where the Latin has venial sin as “the impiety and filthiness of the human heart,” the French exclaims, “which is the most terrible sin before God.”⁵⁹ Although the tone is often more polemical in French, occasionally it is less so. At least sometimes this may reflect Calvin’s awareness that the people whom he is criticizing and those to whom he is speaking come from the same class. Thus, in the chapter on baptism, when he is describing an Anabaptist (mis)understanding of the differences between Old and New Testaments, the French says “having read something they don’t have the understanding to go beyond” [the words], though the Latin original is rather sharper.⁶⁰

Small changes in the French also give it a more intimate or emotional quality. The addition of personal pronouns, such as “my sin,” invites the French faithful to enter more fully into the text, the translation of 2 Cor. 4:8 as “we endure poverty” instead of “we labor” gives a similar personal intensity. This shades over into the language of exhortation; for example, where the Latin says let us “accuse ourselves ... be justified in Him” the French repeats the idea in more extreme language: “that we be dead in ourselves so that we may be brought to life and vivified in Him.”⁶¹

Sometimes the French offers glimpses into the prevailing religious culture of the audience, for example, when a loose translation of the theological statement “*facere quod in se est*,” which the Latin simply cites, is called “a common proverb,” or a Latin pronoun reference to a Roman priest-confessor becomes the folksy “some Master John.”⁶² Some phrases make lists more concrete and/or add significant completion to an idea, perhaps even giving specific examples when the Latin is more general and abstract. For example, a simple reference to “saints” in Latin becomes “swearing by St. James or St. Anthony”; or a reference to traditional ecclesiastical officials names “suffragans” (bishops) and officials in Latin but is expanded to include “vicars and penitentiaries”—persons whom the French audience might in fact know better than bishops!⁶³

Shaping the Latin text to fit a particular lay audience, in France, is evident in the ways Calvin speaks of another significant category of people whom his readers would recognize, that is, the theologians of the medieval church. For his French

⁵⁹ Wevers 4:14:8, 3:26:2, 5:32:6; McKee 1541, 190, 163, 303.

⁶⁰ Wevers 11:18:57–51; McKee 1541, 529.

⁶¹ Wevers 5:20:6, 17:17:3, 12:22:40; McKee 1541, 291, 699, 567.

⁶² Wevers 2:20:120, 5:20:23; McKee 1541, 87, 292.

⁶³ Wevers 14:19:9, 3:13:79; McKee 1541, 647, 138.

audience, Calvin commonly refers to “the master of the *Sentences*,” although the Latin uses that descriptive phrase and the proper name Lombard interchangeably. (The one exception is a French reference to “their master Lombard,” where the Latin sarcastically says, “their Pythagoras, Lombard.”)⁶⁴ Apparently Calvin thought that his readers would have heard of the *Sentences*, and probably the *Decretal* and “sacred canons” (which he names only rarely, particularly in marginal notes),⁶⁵ but he was less sure about the name “Lombard” and does not use “Gratian” at all. However, it is the collective references that are particularly interesting. The words “scholastics,” “sophists,” and “Sorbonnists,” and sometimes a reference to “the schools,” appear in both Latin and French, but the proportions are significantly different.⁶⁶ The French almost never uses “scholastics,” but it says “Sorbonnists” much more often, suggesting that for practical purposes, people in France would see the theological faculty in Paris as not only among the most famous but also as the only scholastics in their sphere. Although Calvin does not say so, the repetition of the name Sorbonnists might well signify an intensified personal resentment toward these particular schoolmen—if not on his own part, at least on the part of French followers of the gospel who would identify the Sorbonnists as those who were persecuting them and who had condemned an increasing number of their fellow believers to exile and the stake.

Calvin’s audience was essentially persecuted laity, living under the cross. Some of the changes in the French translation may reflect the situation of small groups and individuals who do not have formal churches or church buildings. For example, Calvin omits the phrase “in the church” when he speaks of praying for kings and rulers (1 Tim. 2:1–2) and adds a phrase about “as they see that it is good to assemble.” Another seemingly insignificant detail might point in the same direction; in listing what the faithful should be willing to risk for righteousness’ sake, Calvin includes the same three items but arranged in different order; in Latin the order is life, fortune, and honor, whereas in French it is honor, fortune, and life.⁶⁷ Perhaps for the elite, honor was the most valuable, but ordinary people—who would not be judged to have public honor in the same way as nobles—would

⁶⁴ Some examples: Wevers 2:10:9, 2:10:42 & 51, 4:63:5, 6:25:59-60; McKee 1541, 62 (thrice), 270, 354.

⁶⁵ Wevers 16:12:27; McKee 1541, 598.

⁶⁶ “Canonists and scholastic theologians”: Wevers 5:39:9, and many other examples of *scholastici*, but this is the single use in French, McKee 1541, 282. “Sophists of the Sorbonne”: Wevers 2:21:2; McKee 1541, 88. “Sophists and Sorbonnists” in French (McKee 1541, 176) instead of *scholasticis sophistis* (Wevers 4:1:18); “theologians of the Sorbonne” in French (McKee 1541, 188, 319) instead of *scholastici* (Wevers 4:12:9, 6:2:14). “Schools of Sorbonne” in French (McKee 1541, 320) instead of schools (Wevers 6:2:28). “Scholastics” (Wevers 6:18:1, 8:8:25) becomes “Sorbonnists” (McKee 1541, 343, 426). For more examples, see subject index in McKee 1541.

⁶⁷ Wevers 8:15:88, 9:16:20, 17:15:7–8; McKee 1541, 443, 474, 698.

naturally consider their lives the highest price they could risk for righteousness. And for French Protestants, suffering for their faith, even to death, was a very present reality.

CONCLUSION

The pastoral character of Calvin's translation is evident in the multiple ways that he sought to accommodate the Latin to his vernacular-speaking audience. One notable observation is how smoothly he does this; often the addition of a word or two provides the French users with the clues necessary to orient themselves. Increased attention to identifying subjects and emphasizing transitions makes the text more accessible to readers and especially to auditors. Explanations or simplifications of specific points are handled with a minimum of fuss. Some nuances of theology are sacrificed to avoid confusing and therefore distracting lay Christians from the practical appropriation of the teaching. Illustrations and polemic are sometimes localized in accordance with the French context in which the audience was living, making adjustments for people who could be vulnerable to Anabaptist ideas because of the appeal of a simple reading of the New Testament. Concrete examples help to bring some of the more abstract Latin ideas down to earth. A heightening of contrasts serves to give the lay audience of the *Institutes* a clearer sense of right and wrong teaching.

The 1541 French *Institutes* is indeed a translation of the 1539 Latin, but it is also a pastorally sensitive accommodation to the specific audience. It does not condescend—nor can it be said simply to engage the people where they are—but it offers a challenge within the reach of devout lay Christians. ■

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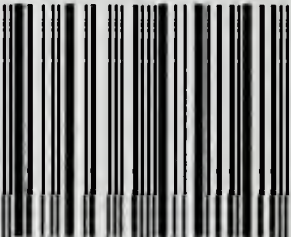
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